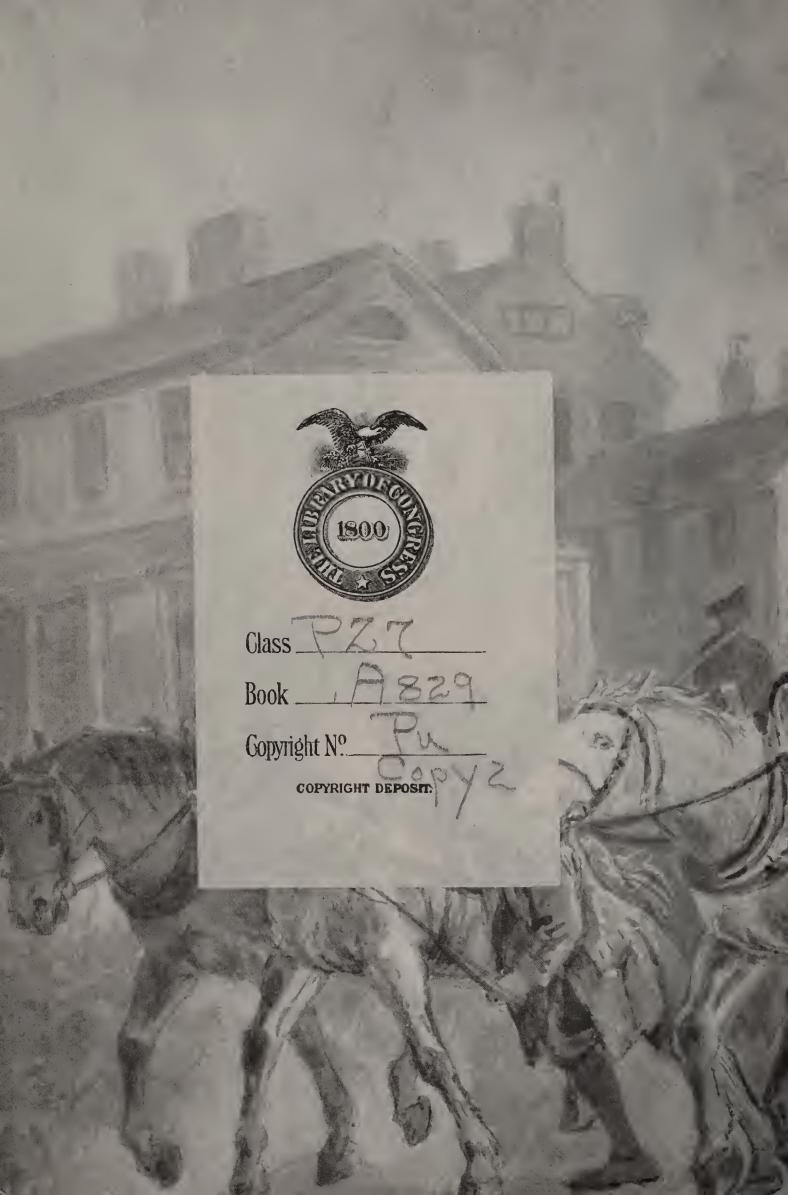
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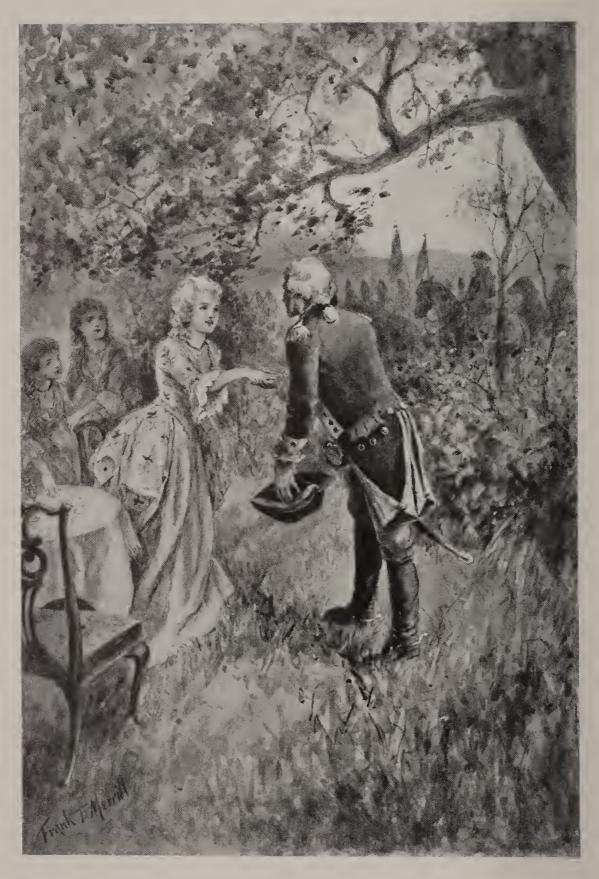


### "THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

A STORY OF NEW YORK YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION







The British commander bowed low over her hand.-- $Page\ 204$ .

## "THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

A Story of New York Young People in the Time of the Revolution

BY

#### LEONORA SILL ASHTON

ILLUSTRATED BY
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BOSTON LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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To M. S. A. AND F. T. A.



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#### "THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

#### CHAPTER I

"In all Niew Am-"

Neltje Van Dam stopped suddenly in the middle of her enthusiastic exclamation, and bent over her small sister's silver porringer, which she had been polishing vigorously.

"Catch not thy words, Neltje daughter. I like to hear thy tongue slip like that. This good town will ever be 'Niew Amsterdam' to thy father; and a better name or a better place, I never hope to see."

Master Augustus Van Dam, who had been standing by the window, settled himself in his high-backed chair in front of the blazing woodfire, and, giving a sigh of content, puffed steadily at his long-stemmed pipe.

"But, Father," came from the little figure

at the opposite end of the room, "the Watts girls and Sally Lansing and Clarissa Morton all laugh at me when I say things like that. Why, when I started for home yesterday after the party, Sally called after me, 'Fare thee well, Dutch lass,' and such a laugh as you never heard went up from all the boys and girls."

There was a suspicious glitter in Neltje's blue eyes as she spoke, and just the suggestion of a droop to the pretty corners of her mouth; but both disappeared as if by magic, as her father pulled himself out of his chair, in one of his quick attacks of temper.

"And then dost thou call that an insult, child of mine?" he demanded. "Art thou ashamed of thy forbears from the brave Netherlands overseas? Art ashamed of thy father and mother? To be sure, both thee and thy sister were born in this new land, but the Dutch blood should run proud in thy veins, I tell ye; no matter what English or French or Quaker say to thee! 'Dutch lass' indeed! No prouder name than that couldst thou go by. 'Dutch lass! Dutch lass!'"

Augustus Van Dam was really very lame, but he managed to limp up and down the room on his gouty foot, while he tried to find an outlet for his rage.

In a moment his daughter was beside him, clinging to his arm.

"You cannot understand until I tell you. The boys and girls had no thought of insult for me; least of all for you and Mother. They only meant that I am old-fashioned, Father. That is what they always say;—that I must live up to the times, and talk and act more as other people do. They say that this isn't Niew Amsterdam any more—that it's New York now; and to call it by its old name is like—well—like wearing a bonnet of last year's make; and of course thou wouldst never want me to do that, Father."

"Of course not! Never, child. But now, cease wearying me with the aimless prattle of thy friends, and get thee back to thy work."

The storm had blown over as quickly as it came.

Augustus Van Dam patted his daughter's golden head, and then took himself back to his chair by the fire, and to his pipe, thoroughly restored to his usual serene state of mind.

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Neltje was used to the sudden bursts of rage that took place when, for any reason, that serenity happened to be disturbed; and like her mother, she was always able to still the tempest, and then at once to forget all that had happened.

Now her father watched her contentedly, as she tidied the sideboard in the corner of the room. The sunlight poured in on her snowy little apron and on her blue dress, and mingled its beams with her yellow curls.

Indeed, the golden flood bathed the entire room, with all its loved and cared-for furnishings. It lay on the polished surface of the table and the overarching beams of oak; on the sideboard of the same wood, on the blue dishes, on the pewter mugs, and on the few precious pieces of silver which were scattered here and there.

Outside, the soft April wind blew in from the sea, over the Green, where some young men were playing at bowls on the early sward, and stirred the white curtains at the window. The big placid man by the fireside gave a very audible sigh of content.

"There is really no other home on these shores like my own," he told himself. "And no other place on earth equal to this town, whatever its name may be."

"How are thy flowers coming along to-day, child?" he asked Neltje.

The girl came close to his chair. "I'll warrant the whole row of tulips by the fence will be out by the time you can walk out on that lame foot to see them, Father. And that means the day after to-morrow. Remember what the doctor said. And if you go as far as the garden, then perhaps you can take a little walk on the Battery the next day."

"We will wait and see what thy mother says," broke in Master Van Dam hurriedly. "We will let thy mother decide, Neltje. She knows more about me and my ills than any doctor."

"Mother and Ottolene ought to be here any hour now," replied the girl, dimpling with joy, and once more picking up her sister's porringer for a final rub. Ottolene still clung to her baby things, although she was five years old.

With this gleaming object in its place on the sideboard, Neltje quickly glanced around the room to see that everything was in perfect order to greet her mother on her return home, and darted into the front hall, on her way up-

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stairs to make herself ready for that great event.

As she went by the front door there came a sudden rap of the knocker. Opening the door in answer, she found Clarissa Morton and Sally Lansing, both flushed and excited, and evidently eager to tell something of great importance.

Neltje looked from one to the other, all interest and curiosity.

"What is it, girls? What is it?" she begged. Then, remembering her trip upstairs to her room:

"Come with me and tell me while I do my hair. The packet on which Mother and Ottolene are returning home will be in sight any minute now."

Clarissa and Sally followed Neltje upstairs into the low-ceilinged room overlooking the garden at the back of the house. This room Neltje shared with her small sister.

The counterpanes on the two beds and the curtains blowing at the open windows were as white as newly fallen snow. Some hand-made rugs lay on the floor at intervals, and some white candles stood in shining pewter sticks.

Although these last were the only ornaments to be seen, the room was neither bare nor lonely in its appearance. It seemed rather, as did the one downstairs, to hold out arms of love and hospitality to all who entered.

Neltje scrubbed her face and hands at the washstand, smoothed her hair, and put on a fresh dress.

"I don't know any bedroom that's as pretty and neat as this is," exclaimed Sally, who had been looking around in a silence which was unusual for her. "You Netherlanders do wonders with your homes."

Neltje's fair face was flushed as she faced her friend.

"I am glad you like my room, Sally," said she. "And I must ever be proud of all that my Holland forbears have given me. But listen to me, Sally and Clarissa. I don't want to be called a Netherlander; and I don't want to call you two girls English girls. All three of us were born right here on this island, in this new land, and now we're something different from anything that ever saw the light of day in the old world—something ourselves. Can't you understand? I am a New Yorker."

The sparkling Sally took the earnest little speaker around the waist and danced with her about the room.

"Who has been whispering in your ears, Neltje?" she cried. Then she beckoned both her friends to her and sank her voice to a whisper, as she began to relate the exciting news which she and Clarissa had brought.

"But I don't understand what you mean. Can't you say it out loud?" asked Neltje in her natural tone of voice.

"It's best not to say it too loud," warned Clarissa, as she saw that Sally was ready to comply with the request. "Be careful."

"Why 'tis this," continued Sally in a stage whisper, which caused her friend some concern. "You've heard your father talk about Lord Grenville, haven't you?"

"Of course I've heard about Lord Grenville," answered Neltje. "All Father's friends who have visited him while he has had this bad attack of gout have talked about him and his taxes, whatever those are, and little else. I haven't troubled myself much about him, Sally, to tell the truth, except to wish that those gentlemen would talk of something different. Such

things make Father get excited and angry, and my only thought is how to quiet him and keep him from worrying when he is in such awful pain."

"Other people besides your father are getting angry and excited, too," quoth Sally, with a world of meaning in her dark eyes. "For now, with all else he has done, this same Lord Grenville is planning to raise huge sums of money for England by making us stamp every paper that is used in the Colonies."

"What is the money for?" asked Neltje.

"Why, they say it is to help England pay what she has had to spend in the American Colonies, in fighting the Indians and their allies, the French; and in so keeping this land the new England that it is."

"And what is there wrong in that?" asked Neltje. "It seems only right and just to me, when England has done that for us."

"Tis not wrong in itself, Neltje," broke in Clarissa, in subdued tones of her own. "There are men right here in New York, like Mr. De-Lancey himself, who say that England has every right to take such measures, that she has borne the brunt of the fight, and that we are

her colonies, and should help share all her burdens. 'Tis only the way in which it is done that angers people."

"My father says that we are free-blooded English ourselves, and that we should not be taxed for anything, unless each colony on these shores sends a representative to Parliament, to know what is going on there, and to help make the laws that govern us."

"So the cry: 'No taxation without representation!'" Sally burst forth, unable to contain herself any longer.

"But the secret?—The secret, girls? Is this all you have to tell?" asked Neltje, somewhat disappointed. She had learned very little that was new or exciting from her visitors so far.

This time Sally's voice sank to a most mysterious whisper.

"Why, this morning as—" But she went no further, for just at that moment there came the sound of a rather unsteady "tap, tap" of a cane on the floor of the hall below, and a stentorian voice called:

"Neltje! Neltje Van Dam! Where art thou? Here is the packet from Boston, arrived and moored, and thy mother almost at the door, and no daughter to welcome her!"

With a flying dart Neltje left her two friends with their wonderful secret still untold, and was downstairs and in the hall before her father reached the front door.

When Clarissa and Sally came in, the upper half of that Dutch door had been left open, and now Neltje could see through it the tall figure of her mother and the top of her little sister's head as the two came up the path.

What a home-coming that was! Sally and Clarissa, standing shyly at the head of the stairs, saw Neltje almost devour with kisses the sweet-faced lady with the gentle voice, as well as the chubby, round-faced little girl who had been clinging to her hand.

Master Van Dam gave his wife and daughter a hearty welcome all his own; and black Drusilla, appearing from the kitchen at the sound of the happy voices, showed all her gleaming white teeth in her broadest smile.

When the greetings were over, Augustus Van Dam tapped the floor somewhat impatiently with his cane.

"Come now, Mother; come Ottolene," said

he. "Do not delay here as though thou wert strangers in thine own house. Take off thy wraps, and let us all get in by the fire. The late afternoon is chill, and you will be weary with the long journey. Neltje promised that an early supper should be ready for thee whenever thou shouldst reach home. The sooner we all settle down again to regular ways, the better."

"Supper is all ready, isn't it, Drusilla?" asked Neltje, her voice gurgling with joy.

"Just ez soon ez you all's ready," answered the radiant Drusilla.

Mistress Van Dam laid aside her bonnet and mantle, and the whole family moved towards the dining-room door. Ottolene clung to her father's hand, quaintly and unconsciously copying his limp as she walked beside him. Neltje hung on her mother's arm as though she would never let her go out of her sight again. She forgot, in her excitement and happiness, that her two friends were still standing on the landing at the head of the stairs.

Mistress Van Dam spied the two figures, however.

"Clarissa and Sally! What are you two

girls doing up there, hiding like mice? Take off your things and come down and have supper with us."

"Oh, Mistress Van Dam! Do you really mean it?"

"Indeed I do. Come without delay girls, and then we will not keep Drusilla's good meal waiting and perhaps spoiling in the oven."

The girls did not need a second invitation, nor did it take them many minutes to prepare themselves to go downstairs.

"We'll hear all the news from Boston," declared Sally. "Clarissa, I wonder if they have it there?"

"Do be careful, Sally," begged the latter. "Something tells me we must not speak too freely about such things as these."

"Thou art getting so old thou art cautious," teased Sally, imitating Master Van Dam, and with her brown eyes sparkling as they always did when Clarissa became very demure.

"Sally! What manners you have! Making fun of a person who is your host. When will you learn to behave?"

"Perhaps when I am sixteen, or rather, when I am as old as you are, my dear," came the an-

swer, and Sally pulled her friend down through the hall to the dining-room.

Sally was just Neltje's age, between fourteen and fifteen years old; and as she and Clarissa entered the dining-room, they set to work at once to help with the preparations for supper. The three girls set the long polished table in the middle of the room, while Drusilla gave her savory dishes their finishing touches, as she took them smoking from the round Dutch oven.

There were two great fowls browned to a turn, cakes of raised dough, currant jelly, spices, and rich pastries. The table was loaded as they all took their places around it; and the light from the candles, which Neltje had set on the sideboard and on the table, shone with the afterglow of the sunset upon six happy faces.

"The packet made good time," began Mistress Van Dam, as soon as they were seated. She knew the circle was anxious to hear all the news of the trip. "It was late in leaving Boston, but the wind was with us, and whatever time was lost in starting we made up on the way."

"What caused the delay at the first?" asked her husband, helping each one at the table plentifully to everything in sight, and beaming upon his reunited household with infinite delight.

"There are troublous times in that town, even as there are here, Augustus," answered his wife.

"Tut, tut," exclaimed her husband. "Let us put troubles aside, I pray thee, when we have a chance to enjoy peace and comfort like this. Tell of thy pleasures, wife, and give Neltje, here, an inkling of what furbelows thou hast brought to her."

Mistress Van Dam cheerfully answered her husband's plea.

"I brought you a scarlet kirtle, Neltje, and a lace kerchief, and a little ivory fan, all of which you shall have after supper, when I unpack my belongings."

"Oh-h," breathed the older girls. The two visitors loved Mistress Van Dam dearly; but there was a grave look on her face, and all three, Neltje, Clarissa, and Sally, saw it and wondered.

"'Tis not hard to see what Ottolene's parting

gift from Mistress Henshaw was," continued the lady. "She has hugged that dolly night and day since it came to her."

"For thee, Augustus, I brought a new kind of spade to dig around the garden with, when your foot is better. Pompey will bring it up from the packet in the morning with the trunk. For Drusilla, I brought an orange and red handkerchief. But Augustus, apart from our pleasure during the visit and on the trip, I heard many things; things that all thoughtful men and women must know. To begin: the Bostonians are enraged to a fury over this taxing of the Colonies by England, by means of stamped paper."

The three girls looked at one another, but said nothing. They waited for Neltje's mother to continue.

"And," went on the lady, "wherever you meet people, on the street or in their homes, they talk of little else but of the monstrous way in which England is treating us. Hast heard her latest demands, Augustus?"

"I know well she is overbearing and unreasonable," answered her husband. "But 'tis much better, methinks, to submit to a few things,

even though they cause some discomfort, and, in the meantime, to send our hands a little farther into our pockets than usual, than to be ever disturbed and anxious, and so lose all the peace from our lives. Thou sayest I should hear, good wife." Augustus waxed warmer to the subject as he talked. "I do hear, let me tell thee, whenever I walk our streets; whenever I step into store or tavern; whenever men meet together; that England does this and England does that. That she says we may not trade with this country and with that country; and that we may not people this land beyond the Alleghany Mountains, and so on and so on. But always there is more talk about such things than is real. I doubt me that this heavy taxing will ever come to pass; and if it does, then when it does will be time enough to worry about it."

Master Van Dam pushed his chair back from the table and reached for his pipe. His wife had been away from home for a month, and in that time speculations over these very questions had reached fever height in New York as well as in Boston. He had listened to the arguments for and against the policy that England had adopted in her treatment of the American Colonies; but he had resolutely endeavored not to take these matters too seriously. He could not have the peace of mind and living, which he valued so greatly, destroyed. He had hoped that his wife would bring home ideas that were quite new, and would divert him from this ever present subject.

Mistress Van Dam's quick eye caught the expression of disappointment on her husband's face, and at sight of it she turned to more pleasant topics.

"But I have saved the best news for the last," she said. "And it has nothing whatever to do with affairs of the Colonies. So draw not away from the table, Augustus. I know thou wilt be pleased with what I have to tell. You remember Eliza Cogswell, who was married a little time before ourselves?"

"Indeed I remember her," came the reply.

"But she has been gone from our midst these eighteen years. She married David Henry of South Carolina, if I mistake not."

"Exactly so. And a month ago I could have told nothing but that about her. Now I know that she and her husband have gone where no trouble is; but their son, David Henry, a fine

boy of fifteen, I found attending school in Boston."

"I seemed to be a welcome sight as a friend of his mother's, and he took to our Ottolene as though she were his own sister. And Augustus; I trust thou wilt not mind. I invited the young David to come and spend the summer with us here in New York."

"Good!" ejaculated Master Van Dam. Here was something, indeed, that delighted his hospitable soul.

There were other people in that room who were pleased, too. Sally and Clarissa were leaning forward, trying not to appear too eager for good manners, and Neltje's eyes were gleaming.

"What does he look like, Mother?"

"He seems a likely boy, with a high spirit and keen intelligence. He talked very learnedly about affairs with England; and young as he is, he has very decided ideas in that quarter. He thinks we should resist with all our power everything like the stamp taxation. Moreover, he is a member of a certain band in Boston, called the 'Sons of Liberty'."

Sally Lansing could not contain herself any

longer. "Mistress Van Dam! I may tell a secret here, may I not?"

"Why, of course, my dear. We are all friends together."

Clarissa listened, but said nothing; and it was Neltje's turn to lean forward eagerly as Sally spoke in a low, excited tone.

"Hugh Johnson and the two Paulding boys and Herbert Van Wyck have all told me about that;—that the young men in the Colonies are forming themselves into a band that the British are not to know about. And they say they are going to resist these unfair things that England plans to do, until they stop doing them altogether. Or, if they do not stop, they're going to fight."

"What is that?" thundered the master of the house, putting down the mug of frothy ale which had been half way to his lips, and gazing at Sally's burning cheeks. "What do such upstarts as those boys know about what is going on? And what is it for them to take things into their own hands in that fashion?"

"I think they know a great deal about things, from all I hear them say, Master Van Dam," answered Sally, her chin in the air. "The

British are getting very high and mighty in the Colonies, and I will say it, even though my own dear father was English born. After all, this is a land by itself. It's our land; and these young men think we should be free to make our own laws on our own soil. That is why they call themselves by that name—the 'Sons of Liberty'."

Augustus Van Dam looked steadfastly before him, gazing into space.

"That is good reasoning for young and old," he said at last, very quietly.

When supper was over, and while Drusilla removed the things from the table, Mistress Van Dam did a little unpacking. She brought forth from her big bag the presents of which she had spoken, as well as a bright little kerchief each for Clarissa and Sally.

The girls tucked these away in their bodices with great delight. But there was a topic of which they wished to know a great deal more.

"Tell us more about David Henry," begged all three.

"He is a lad who has had too much that is serious fall to his share. When his face lights with a smile, one can imagine the fun that lies

behind that grave countenance. But evidently he has spent most of his time studying and talking with people older than himself. You girls must all try to have a cheering effect upon his quiet ways. You must have him meet all of your gay friends."

"Oh, we will!" fervently exclaimed Neltje.

"I wonder if he will tell us about the Sons of Liberty in Boston," said Sally. "He'd be about the age of the boys that are joining here."

"Older men have joined with the band, too," announced Clarissa.

"One must not tell all one knows about such things as that," cautioned Mistress Van Dam. "Girls, let me tell you something. One of the first things a woman must learn to do in times like these is to guard her tongue. 'Tis the men who take the action, and too little is left for us but talk. 'Tis well to form the habit of being I am free to say, however, that it is common talk in Boston that no less a person than Mr. Adams, of whom you have all heard, attended one of the Sons of Liberty meetings in his own town the other day. At that same meeting, I heard, there were present a sea captain, four of the merchants of Boston, and a printer.

So that sounds as if Clarissa is right in thinking that older and more thoughtful men than these younger ones belong to the band, too."

Near the end of June, another packet came sailing to New York from Boston. As it drew near the Battery and Bowling Green, a young man of fifteen years stood in the fore of the vessel, his gaze stretching eagerly to the shores of the city of which he had heard so much, and which now lay bathed in the summer sunlight.

David Henry was slight and tall, and Mistress Van Dam had described him well; but now, the serious expression upon his face had entirely disappeared. He smiled to himself, as though something long desired had come to When, finally, the craft was moored him. firmly to her holdings; when he had actually set foot upon the shore, and stood in the shadow of Fort George and its batteries; when he looked across the Bowling Green and up Broadway; then, for a moment, he forgot all about Mistress Van Dam and chubby Ottolene, who had so charmed his fancy two months ago, and whom he had expected to meet him upon his arrival in New York.

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His mind was filled with wonder as he sought to reconcile the ideas that he had formed of this city with the reality of its shores. He was measuring with his very accurate eyes the Fort, sheltered on its landward side by high ground, and pointing its one hundred and twenty guns out towards the harbor. It seemed to him that that harbor was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

"Suppose these colonies formed a country all by itself," ran the thoughts of the boy, as he stood gazing out to sea. "And suppose this harbor was the door to it all. And suppose we made our own laws, and tried different ways of living—and—had great manufactures—and—ships—and—"

The keen blue eyes looked over the blue water until they met the blue sky; — "and a flag of our own."

"Is this David Henry?"

The boy turned with a start. The voice that had sounded behind him was rather peremptory. As he turned, he saw a heavily built man leaning on a cane; and he saw, also, a warm genial countenance beaming down upon him with as kindly a smile as he had ever known.

"Is this David Henry?" came the question again.

"I am David Henry, sir," answered the boy, holding out his hand.

"Well, my boy, then thou art the one we have been looking for, and right glad am I to see you. The mistress thought you might like one of your own kind to come and meet you, and I question not she thought, mayhap, the walk would help my lame foot."

"I trust it will, sir," answered David, looking at the cane. "And Ottolene? Where is Ottolene? She promised she would be here to meet me and give me welcome when I came to New York."

Ottolene's father's face gleamed with delight.

"'Tis that bad girl's punishment that she is kept at home this morning. She found the brown sugar jar and helped herself; whereat her mother put her in a closet with the jar and bade her finish the sweet stuff, thinking thus to cure her for all time. When the closet door was opened, she had finished it, and asked for more!"

The big man's sides shook with laughter, and David joined in the merriment.

"I hope she suffered no ill effects, sir."

"Not one in the least. She is as hearty and well as ever, and not over showing her disappointment at not coming with me to meet you. She keeps her peace of mind does that baby, I can tell you."

"But, Father! You're forgetting all about me."

From somewhere behind the bulky figure came the sweetest voice David had ever heard; and as her father stepped aside at its sound, he caught sight of the smiling Neltje. With her blue dress, her white kerchief, her golden hair, and her big blue eyes, she seemed the embodiment of this happy shore; hers was the spirit of the sky and the sea and the gulls and the sunlight.

"This is my other daughter," said her father, putting his arm around the girl. "And on God's earth there never walked a sweeter maid. This, child, is David Henry. Now shall we start for home? Mother will be watching for us."

David placed himself on one side of Neltje, while she held her father's hand on the other; and together the three walked up Broadway be-

tween the double rows of shade trees that guarded the comfortable homes of the neighborhood.

"New York is certainly a charming spot," David told himself.

### CHAPTER II

"Are you related to Patrick Henry, David?"
Nearly five years had passed since the young
man from Boston had first set foot upon the
soil of New York. David was almost twenty
years old now; and Ottolene, who asked the
question, was ten.

She was taller and older, of course, than when David had first seen her, but her round face and her big eyes, in color like her sister's, had never failed to charm him with their quaintness and gravity.

"No, I am not related to Patrick Henry at all," he replied. "Unless some ancestor back in some country of the old world belongs to us both."

- "Tell me about him," begged the little girl.
- "But I told you about him only last night."
- "Well, tell it again. Please! I like to hear it. Tell it right from the beginning."

David began obediently:

"The Stamp Act, which placed a tax on all

papers used in the Colonies, became a law in 1765; and the following March, Patrick Henry, who was a member of the House of Burgesses in Virginia, introduced resolutions in that House, denouncing the right of England to adopt such a policy of taxing America. At this meeting—"

"Now-now David-let me tell the rest."

Ottolene interrupted the tale without ceremony, and the young man listened, amused and delighted at the excited little face trying to assume an expression of great solemnity, while the childish voice proclaimed:

"At this meeting Patrick Henry said: 'Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third—' and then the other people called out 'Treason! Treason!' because they thought he meant that someone was going to kill the King of England; and Patrick Henry just said, 'may profit by their example.' And then the meeting went on and on, and they talked about England not letting us do what we want to; and then Patrick Henry said: 'I care not what others may say, but as for me, give me Liberty or give me Death.' Is that right, David?"

"Just as right as it can be, in substance and in letter, my friend."

"What dost thou mean by that long word?" asked the little girl. But she was obliged to forego any more fascinating conversation with David for the present; for just at this moment steps were heard outside the door that opened upon the back piazza, and her father appeared. As usual, Ottolene sprang to meet him.

Augustus Van Dam had not changed much in face or figure in the five years just passed. But his cane was gone now; the gout seemed to have disappeared, and the expression of dogged determination, which had always been a prime characteristic of the man, had deepened in every shade of emotion on his face and in every gesture of his hand.

"In spite of all our trouble and worry, civilization is going forward," said he, catching sight of David. "This wooden piping for the city water is a great success."

"I am glad of that, Master Van Dam," answered the young man. He carefully refrained from saying anything more on this subject, for not so very long ago there had been a ripe battle of words between Augustus and

some of the city fathers, as to whether the wooden pipes which were a new invention for carrying water to different parts of the town should or should not be laid within the precincts of his beloved garden.

Urged and finally persuaded by his sensible wife, he had finally given his grudging consent to the work being done. And lo and behold! The pear trees had blossomed as usual in the spring; the grape-vines had sprouted, and bunches of these purple treasures had hung in wealth from the vines in the autumn; the flowers had spread their glad array along the paths; all in the face of the fact that the pipes had been laid. And now, even this doughty champion of the good old times was willing to admit the convenience of having water pumped directly to one's door.

"Civilization is going forward," repeated the master of the house, seating himself in his usual place by the fire. "And why, David, may we not be allowed to enjoy in peace all the wonderful comforts which men's minds are working out for us, on the soil which is our own?"

"That question stands first in the minds of thinking men to-day, Master Van Dam; and, if I am not mistaken, it is going to be answered very definitely before long."

"I am right glad to talk with you this morning, David. The town is rife with murmurs and uprisings. It seems there has never been real quiet in our streets since the Stamp Act riots."

"What dost thou think now of these impostors from overseas meddling more and more with our affairs? Nay,—" Master Van Dam corrected himself—"I know what thou thinkest. But what are we going to do, is the question. You with your young blood think quicker than old fogies like me."

"Neither quicker nor as well, sir; of that I am sure. But since you ask me, I consider that things have come to an unpardonable pass in our quarters, and especially in the matter of this tax on tea."

"What dost thou think can be done about it?" David drew from his pocket a neatly folded paper, upon which he had evidently copied something.

"Master Van Dam, you spoke a moment ago of the riots in the streets of New York, when this Colony in union with all the others refused what happened."

Augustus Van Dam looked at the young man curiously, for there was a strange veiled tone in his voice.

"Indeed I remember. You Sons of Liberty surely disturbed the peace of our town; but even though many of those who started the riots were rough and uncouth men and boys, they were in the right, David. I never questioned that—they were in the perfect right."

"I know we were," replied David with a gleam in his eye. "New York and the other colonies resisted; and we won. We won in the matter of all taxation, Master Van Dam, except in the case of the tax on tea. And it is generally believed,"—here David's face grew stern and his voice rose with a decision that made Ottolene open her eyes in wonder. "And I believe it is as true as God's word that that duty has not been retained as revenue, but as an expression of the right of England to tax America."

The young man's eyes were flashing now.

"It is reported," he continued, "that it was said recently in Parliament that without that

right to tax the people of these Colonies, sovereignty would be an empty phrase."

"Scoundrels! Puppets!" sputtered Augustus Van Dam, stamping his foot and searching his vocabulary in vain for words to express his rage and indignation.

"I am told that there are men in England with thought like our own," continued David, "who have taken up our cause in the debates, and have pleaded that we of these Colonies in a new land are free Englishmen, even as themselves, and should be treated as such. But they seem to have little voice in the matter."

"What can we do?" asked little Ottolene anxiously.

Her father put his arm around her and drew her to his knee. David smiled at the anxious face, but went right on with the topic which was absorbing his very soul.

"But there are wise and far-seeing men in our own Colonies; and they will make their voices heard. See what I have here."

David unfolded the paper he had taken from his pocket a moment before.

"Whence came that and what is it?" asked the older man.

"It is a copy of the letter which Mr. Samuel Adams and other gentlemen of Boston have sent to all the towns in our Colonies. These gentlemen have been holding meetings in Faneuil Hall, to discuss just these matters, and—"

"But out with it! Out with it boy!" interrupted Master Van Dam impatiently. "Read me what is written there, I ask thee, without delay."

David began:

"'Brethren, we are reduced to this dilemma; either to sit down quietly under this and every other burden that our enemies shall see fit to lay upon us, or to rise up and resist this and every plan laid for our destruction, as becomes wise freemen. In this extremity, we earnestly request your advice."

"And what has New York done?" demanded Master Van Dam.

"New York has sent its firm approval, sir, and pledged itself to act in all ways for the maintenance of liberty in our land."

"Thou meanest part of New York," objected his listener. "Think thou of the English bred and born here and now holding sway in this city, instead of the peaceful Dutch."

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"I do not mean the English Governor, nor the British troops, nor the sympathizers with the tyrannical rule of England. I mean, sir, the Sons of Liberty, in whatever walks of life they may be found."

"And thank God for such," answered Augustus Van Dam devoutly. "I understand. And now, David, I must be getting across town to the counting-house."

"And I to my studies," said David, putting the precious piece of paper in his pocket again.

He went out of the dining-room door, through the garden, and around the front of the house to Broadway. He was in plenty of time to meet the grave man at King's College who was guiding him in his law studies; but he wanted to get out in the crisp November air. He must have action when his mind was seething with ideas like those contained in the message from Boston, as well as in the conversation of every man and boy with whom he talked.

"Rise up and resist!"

That was what the angry tumult of the street and the wise quiet counsel of thoughtful men agreed upon. This was what was coming indeed; but when, and by whom? They had been five happy years that David had spent in New York. That invitation to come to the Van Dam home for a visit, given in Boston to the lonely schoolboy, had proved to be a turning-point in his life; and the summer spent in the city had been so agreeable to all concerned that it had resulted in a second invitation for him to make his home with the family he had learned to love so well.

They had been five momentous years, too.

In addition to all the parties and the picnics and the dances and the merrymakings, the young man had diligently followed his course at King's College. His studies had been chiefly in Latin and Greek, history, and mathematics; and through his knowledge of the lore of ancient days, the sensitive boy had come to understand the restless and determined spirit which was making its presence known with mighty throbs in this bright city, and, from all he could learn, in Boston and the other American colonies.

The topic of the stamps, which the British Parliament had decreed should be placed on every paper used in the Colonies, had been the final touch to the long smouldering fires of rage

in the hearts of the Colonists; of rage and resentment at the manner in which they had been treated by England. The Stamp Act had become a law in the Colonies in March, 1765.

The Sons of Liberty in New York, into whose ranks David had been received as soon as his presence in the town had become known, left no move unmade to keep these fires burning with ever deepening intensity.

They were hot-headed boys; too hot-headed, many of them, exactly to suit David's gentler judgment of things; but they were one with many older and wiser men of the day, who, in courteous but no uncertain terms, made it known to Parliament that "they demanded the rights of Englishmen, and if they were oppressed they would rebel and try to get better terms from some other power."

General Gage, in command of the troops stationed in the Colonies for their protection, had his headquarters in New York. Perhaps the great harbor decided this policy; perhaps the Tory atmosphere of the Dutch town, now—as many would insist—settled comfortably under British dominion, made New York a pleasanter place for the English General to live in, than

did tempestuous, fiery, yet withal, more puritanical Boston. At any rate, here were his headquarters, and here he observed a seething, angry, rebellious spirit among the citizens of the New World.

When the demand for the rights enjoyed by Englishmen came to his ears he traced its source to many of his own friends and acquaintances, who were among the most fair-minded men in the town; and he felt that it was quite time to prepare for this unseen but powerful force that gripped the minds of the populace with an influence that might soon be uncontrollable.

Out in New York Harbor lay the British ship Coventry.

General Gage begged her Captain for a force of soldiers to patrol the water-front of the city; after which, he and Lieutenant Governor Colden, the acting executive of New York, held several conferences together, the result of which was an extra battalion of men at Fort George.

Preparations like these went on all through the summer following the enactment of the Stamp Act; and by the first of September, the General and his advisers had congratulated themselves that the city was safe, or at least They rejoiced among themselves, these gentlemen; but always in private. Colonists were ever troublesome, and these brothers of theirs on the new soil were more so than any England had ever known. They were rebellious, self-willed children; they must be treated as such, and what they did and said must be ignored as far as possible.

Nevertheless, it was well to keep an eye open to all that was being done. Some things were not so childish after all. British rule was not respected as it should be in New York, and elsewhere in America, men in authority declared among themselves with great emphasis. Had not a pamphlet, bearing the odious and insulting name of "Constitutional Courant" and seriously attacking the rule of England on these shores, been hawked through the streets of New York by the ruffians called the "Sons of Liberty"?

They would have patience though, General Gage declared. "Give a man rope enough and he will hang himself."

However, when no less a person than Mr. James Otis of Boston suggested to the Massachusetts Assembly that the Colonists unite in sending representatives in committees to meet together in a so-called Colonial Congress to consider the new acts of Parliament, then did the red-coated general and the Tory officials knit their brows.

Plans for the first meeting of this "Colonial Congress" were made. The date and the place of meeting were actually set—the first Tuesday in October in the Town Hall in New York. There was more knitting of brows.

Mr. Otis and two of his friends came to the meeting as the representatives from Massachusetts. Others arrived from every one of the thirteen colonies. New York, instead of being represented by members of a street mob, as the British had predicted, sent to the Stamp Act Congress, as it came to be called, Mr. John Cruger, the Mayor of the town, Mr. Leonard Lispenard, Mr. William Bayard, and two of the Livingston family, Philip and Robert.

"Gentleman all," Augustus Van Dam had announced with great satisfaction, when he heard these names.

General Gage was obliged to do some more thinking. The rope had not even begun to do its work. Perhaps the British authorities had provided too long a length. But there were other sides of the question to be considered.

The Stamp Act Congress sat in deliberation for three weeks. Meanwhile, outside the Town Hall, there surged a wave of sentiment which did not use deliberate counsel as a weapon.

While Mr. Cruger, the Livingstons, and others were drawing up, in as courteous terms as they knew, their protest to England against unfair taxation of the American Colonies, the Tory Council was having daily meetings to decide the knotty question of how the great cargoes of stamps from England were to be unloaded and landed in sight of the angry populace of the city. It was finally decided that the sloop that ran occasionally from New York to Albany, and which was now in the harbor, should be used to carry the stamps by night from the British ships to the safety of Fort George.

And then had followed the famous Stamp Act riots, of which David and Master Van Dam had talked together. The flags in the city had been pulled down to half-mast, and the town had been papered with threatening posters, which read:

#### PRO PATRIA

THE FIRST MAN WHO EITHER DISTRIBUTES OR MAKES USE OF STAMPT PAPER, LET HIM TAKE CARE OF HIS HOUSE, PERSON, AND EFFECTS.

## VOX POPULI

WE DARE.

At the same time, the very backgammon boxes in the Merchant's Coffee House were covered with black cloth and the dice were wrapped in small pieces of crape—all as a sign of mourning for the death of Liberty.

None knew better than David Henry whose active brains and eager hands were responsible for such acts as these. Many an hour he had spent when he first came to New York, lounging around on the wharves and lolling in the shops, talking to the young tradesmen and mechanics and sailors. These last heard many things of vital interest, as the merchant ships came and went from the islands of the East Indies. They became acquainted with secrets

of England's trade, and with the laws under which her seamen were bound to do their work.

Many ideas as to how best to resist the Stamp Act decision were not those which David would have adopted as his own. But he listened to them all; and the young men listened to him eagerly, whenever he volunteered an opinion.

He and the Morton twins, James and Richard, and Herbert Van Wyck and many others of their particular set had toiled diligently, setting up tall staffs, which they called "Liberty Poles," in different parts of the city.

"A straight pole reaching up to God and the boundless sky is a fitting symbol of human liberty."

A few had laughed at these words, but many more had agreed, for David Henry had given voice to what they felt but could not say.

Finally, the fifth great pole was in place. It was a huge mast, bound with iron bands and planted firmly in a deep hole.

"It will stand for generations!" Herbert Van Wyck had exclaimed, as they finished their work of setting it up.

But he was mistaken. The watchful eyes

of the British soldiers had marked well that prince of poles, standing for rebellion against the land they served; and with ruthless hands they pulled it to earth and completely destroyed it.

Then the fiery blood of the Sons of Liberty boiled. They had gathered together three hundred men from all quarters of the city, had borne down upon the soldiers who had destroyed the symbol of their thought, and had led them captive to the mayor's office.

Here David Henry, with full confidence in his own speech, had meant to plead the cause of liberty and to express some of the ideas which were rooted in his soul. But the British had no fancy for listening to youths berate the decrees of England; and twenty redcoats had forced themselves upon the little group who had captured their comrades-in-arms. This encounter had taken place on the eminence that was called Golden Hill because of the views of the sunset which could be obtained from the spot. But all thoughts of peace fled from the place, as the officers from Fort George freed their captive brethren with drawn swords. Blood had been shed on that little hill. Those

men, defending their rights to raise the symbol of freedom, had been wounded—wounded for defending the cause of Liberty.

Again and again David Henry had lived over these scenes in conversation with his friends. Similar events had taken place all through the Colonies, and the officers appointed by the Crown to enforce the Stamp Act had lived in terror of their lives. The odious edict had been withdrawn at last, but the tax on tea remained.

"The principle is the same, be the tax great or small," David had heard older men argue. And now that argument was growing more intense than had been that of the stamps, a few years before.

David had walked swiftly, after leaving Ottolene and her father; and now he stood on the grounds of King's College. The waves of the North River were silver gray in the pale November sunlight, while the Jersey shore, on the opposite side of the stream, was still bright with late autumn leaves. The brooding beauty of the land was in sharp contrast to the turbulent thoughts of its inhabitants.

"What is coming?" David asked himself.

"We cannot tell," answered a voice close behind him, "except that free men must fight for their rights and those of their countrymen, as Mr. Samuel Adams has said."

The young man, looking out over the river, had unconsciously spoken his thoughts aloud. Unknown to him, a second figure had appeared upon the scene, and now stood beside him.

He turned at the sound of the voice, and looked upon a face that he had seen many times in and around the college, although he could not have called the newcomer by name.

"You are David Henry, if I am not mistaken, sir?"

"Yes, I am," answered David, facing a slight boyish figure. "And I have seen you more than once at King's College, but I have not the honor of knowing your name."

"My name is Alexander Hamilton," came the answer, in the voice which, from that time on, never failed to thrill David with its penetrating charm.

"Oh," exclaimed the latter. "Alexander Hamilton from the West Indies! Master Van Dam said he saw you the other day at Liberty

Hall, when he and Mr. Van Rensselaer went over to Elizabeth, to have a conference with Mr. Livingston."

"That sounds very much as if you know who I am," said the young man, with a smile. "When I first came to this land, Mr. Cruger, with whom I was working on the islands, gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Livingston, for which I can never cease to thank him. His charming house has been like a home to me; but more than that—more than the peace and pleasure of the Hall—are the people one meets there, and the things one learns by simply listening to the conversation that takes place in that house."

"It is a famous meeting-place for famous minds," agreed David. He had attended several dances at Liberty Hall, the home of the Livingstons, with other members of his young set.

"For instance," continued Hamilton, with his gentle but fascinating enthusiasm, "there is Mr. John Jay, a lawyer. To be sure, it is agreed on all hands that he comes there courting the lovely Sarah Livingston; nevertheless, he has the mental map of the world spread out before him; and the ideals he holds out continually for the Colonies in their struggles with England — why, they are like a white flame of fire!"

"Mr. Jay," echoed David, "is one of the greatest of our Americans. If only he and others like him were free to set up a government of their own, here in their own land!— But tell me," he continued, breaking off into a lighter tone, "you say he is courting Sally Livingston? That will be a choice piece of gossip for our girls. I will tell them as soon as they come home."

"Who are your girls, and where have they been?" asked Alexander Hamilton, keenly interested.

"Neltje Van Dam, Clarissa Morton, and Sally Lansing have been spending two weeks in Connecticut with the Hales," explained David. Then, for a few moments, the conversation of the two young men lingered upon the topic of the social possibilities of the coming winter. Soon, however, they reverted to the subject that was uppermost in all men's minds.

"What were you thinking of when I came upon you, David Henry?" asked Hamilton, laying a hand confidingly on David's arm.

"I was asking myself what was coming to us and to our country," was the blunt reply. "Alexander Hamilton! Things cannot go on as they are. You know it as well as I. And what is going to be the outcome, unless it is war?"

The younger man did not answer at once; and when he did speak, his words sounded as if he had weighed every one of them before uttering them.

"I am convinced that there is no other alternative, unless England changes her policy towards these American Colonies, to a very marked degree. Moreover, from all I hear, these men of finely tempered minds, although they declare it should be a last resort, believe that war is imminent."

"I have seen you, David Henry," continued the young man, "more times than you realize. And strange as it may seem, I had determined to make myself known to you to-day, to ask you if you would help me with a scheme of mine."

Hamilton's face was serious as he spoke, but the grave look on David's face vanished.

"With anything, I promise you! But what can this scheme of yours be?"

"It is no scholar's dream or fancy, and no theory of law," came the answer.

"Tell me your plan, and I will help in any way I can."

"There is no planning or talking or deciding to be done on this matter. It is to be," answered Hamilton, with a decision and confidence which was remarkable in one so young. "It is something to do. A certain number of us have formed together. Our purpose is to drill and to train ourselves as soldiers, and to be in readiness for war with England's skilled troops, when that war comes. We begin tomorrow morning at seven o'clock. Will you join us at the Battery at that hour, and be one of our company?"

"I will be there without fail." It was all that David seemed able to say, and the next moment the two young men had parted.

So it was that the morning after the girls returned to New York from their visit to South Coventry, near Hartford, they looked out of their window to see the fascinating young Alexander Hamilton, of whose charms they had all heard, conducting a swift and decisive drill among a band of young New Yorkers on the

Bowling Green. It was a thrilling sight to watch; yet it had its serious side, too. For David Henry was there, and many another that they knew, training for war. There was no denying the fact.

"They all talk of nothing but being soldiers, Mother," said Neltje anxiously, later in the day, when Mistress Van Dam, her two daughters, and Clarissa and Sally sat knitting by the roaring wood-fire.

"I cannot get over Nathan Hale's talking that way, and planning to lead a soldier's life," exclaimed Clarissa in turn. "Why, Mistress Van Dam, he is nearly a clergyman in his tastes. And such a scholar! He ought to be president of one of our colleges some day; and there he is, studying the military life and making preparations for war, just as David seems to be doing to-day."

"Clarissa left her heart in that big Connecticut farmhouse of the Hales, let me tell you Mistress Van Dam," broke in Sally. "These gentle-mannered schoolmasters have to be watched."

"Hush, child!" came sternly from the lady of the house. "Thou knowest thy mother would not approve such flippant talk, Sally, so why indulge in it so often?"

"I am truly sorry," answered the girl in a penitent voice; but her brown eyes sparkled so with mischief that Clarissa felt called upon to spring to her own defense.

"Sally's tongue is like Minetta Brook for babbling all day long, Mistress Van Dam," she exclaimed. "She chattered on that subject all the way from Hartford to New York; and that in the face of the fact that Nathan Hale is already engaged to be married. So there!" And Clarissa looked up triumphantly over her knitting.

Sally was a little nonplussed over this news; but nothing could really daunt any one of these three girls, who only knitted the faster as their tongues kept busy over affairs at home and abroad.

Christmas was coming, and then the New Year; there were parties to be planned, presents to be bought, and new dresses to be made. Life was full to overflowing with things of interest to the three older girls. Little Ottolene, too, seated beside her mother, with her own small stocking well under way,

occupied her little brain with dreams and fancies of her own contriving.

Suddenly the door opened upon the cheerful scene, and the master of the house came in. Mistress Van Dam instantly laid down her work and went to meet her husband.

"Hast had a good day at the counting house, Augustus?" she asked, drawing his chair up to its accustomed place, and setting his tobacco jar within easy reach.

But the tall man did not so much as offer to remove his greatcoat, much less settle himself in the family circle, as was his wont. Instead, he remained standing in the middle of the floor.

"A good enough day, wife, as far as our own interests are concerned. Could we but be left to our own homes and our own affairs, there would be peace and happiness aplenty for all in this town. But these meddlers overseas—aye, and right at our doors—must needs stir up trouble again and again." The tones of Augustus Van Dam's voice rose with every syllable he uttered. "One thing I forbid in this house! Mother! Neltje! Ottolene! And Drusilla!—Drusilla! Come here, I tell ye! I'll not have so much as one dry tea-leaf

under my roof, until this tax on tea is taken away."

"Girls, remember that," admonished their mother, her own cheeks flushed with excitement. "Tis the little we can do to assert our independence as free Americans. Now rest thyself, Augustus, I beg thee, before supper is ready."

But the big man, for once, paid no attention to the advice of his wife. He was taking down from the wall the musket which had hung there as long as his daughters could remember.

"I have something to do ere supper time, good wife," said he, and he went out into the garden.

#### CHAPTER III

"The fight is coming, and I must be ready for it," said Master Van Dam, an hour later, as he came into the room where his family were seated, and stood his musket in a corner. The firearm had been cleaned and polished, and was evidently ready for use.

"Art going to drill with David and Captain Hamilton, Father?" asked Ottolene.

"Nay, child; not I. Such brilliant youth as that needs not the help of an old man like me. But by the morning light thou shalt see the target I have nailed to the old pear tree. Shooting at that will soon train thy father's eye again. Mother can tell you girls I was a fair shot in the old days, and brought back many a bag of game from the woods on Long Island, when Neltje was but a baby."

Mistress Van Dam nodded in assent. This self-contained woman had suddenly found it impossible to speak. It seemed very natural

for the Mortons and the Van Wycks and that startling young Alexander Hamilton—even for David Henry—to drill and to talk of war. But Augustus—home-loving, peace-loving Augustus—engaging in target practice! To be ready for—what?

Mistress Van Dam went hurriedly into the kitchen, to help Drusilla with the preparations for the evening meal. Clarissa and Sally had been invited to spend the afternoon and to stay for supper. Neltje had managed this, for both girls were eager to gain from David as much information as possible concerning Mr. Hamilton, who seemed to have captured the imagination of young and old.

David had not come in at his accustomed time. The supper had been laid and the meal was progressing, with at least three pairs of ears alert for the sound of footsteps outside the door.

Finally, all had finished. Augustus Van Dam had placed his empty mug for the last time on the table, and he and the others had folded up their napkins and had placed them in their small ivory rings. Still David's chair remained empty.

"I trust the boy is safe and well," exclaimed the head of the house, rather anxiously.

"Keep a plate of supper warm for Master David, Drusilla," instructed Mistress Van Dam.

"Yaas'm," answered the faithful soul, who did not need to be reminded that this hero of hers might come home hungry. "Hope Marse David's all right," she continued, as she began to clear the table. "Thar's been a powerful lot o' commotion on Broadway to-night, Mistress Van Dam,—shoutin' an hollerin'. Guess dem Sons o' Liberty is at it again."

Her mistress rose from her chair at these words; but even as she did so, steps were heard on the back piazza, and she turned back just in time to see David enter the dining-room, more agitated than he had ever appeared before.

His face was pale, and there was a strange gleam in his eye, as he ushered into the room a young man unknown to all but himself.

"This is Paul Revere of Boston," he announced simply. "He has been sent to give a great message to the patriotic citizens of New York by word of mouth, as there was no time for printing a broadcast." David's measured

and deliberate tones were indicative of the strain he was under.

One might have heard the rustle of the leaves outside, so still was that room, as the young stranger stepped forward and repeated the words he had been bidden to carry from house to house.

"Boston has withstood the tyranny of the British tax on tea. Four days ago, fifty men, dressed as Mohawk Indians, crept down to Griffen's Wharf. There lay the British merchant ships, loaded with tea about to be brought ashore for use in the colony of Massachusetts and elsewhere. Swiftly and silently they did their work. Before the nine o'clock bell rang they had cut open three hundred and forty-two chests of tea, and had emptied them into the water."

With this final sentence, the despatch-bearer's work was done at this particular New York home, and Paul Revere turned on his heel and went out of the door, intent upon carrying the news to the ends of the city.

For an instant silence reigned. Then Augustus Van Dam began to laugh. He laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks, at

And soon the rest of the family joined in with him, scarcely knowing what they were doing, so excited they were.

"I wonder how tea tastes, mingled with salt," exclaimed Master Van Dam, when he was able to speak; and then they all laughed again.

Neltje was the first to quiet down. She talked less, perhaps, than any of her friends; but very little that went on escaped her active brain. She knew that word had been received from England, several weeks ago, that ships laden with tea were sailing for Boston, Charleston, and New York. Probably the same thing that had taken place in the New England city would happen here; but the British would be on a very careful lookout now, for their eyes were ever on the Sons of Liberty.

But the sun shone brightly in New York. The holidays were on the way; and Neltje, who had been reared in the teaching that worry was a crime against one's Maker and bespoke a lack of trust in his care, shut out of her mind the thought of what might happen, should the British attempt to land tea in New York.

Nevertheless, in due time, that tea arrived.

One fair day the word went forth that the British ship *Nancy* was lying off Sandy Hook with the first cargo of India tea for the city.

"She has been followed closely by the London," announced David Henry when he came home that evening, bringing, as usual, the very latest news with him.

"What if they try to land the tea?" questioned Ottolene.

"The captain of the *Nancy* declares that he has no tea aboard," answered David, with a smile; and eating a hurried bit of supper, he went out into the dark.

"Oh, I must see what happens!" cried Neltje.

"Stay," warned Mistress Van Dam, as her two daughters sprang up from the table. "This is no time for gentlefolk to be abroad. I have a feeling there will be riots in our streets to-night."

"Mother, for once I do not agree with you," exclaimed Augustus. "Tis time we all saw and knew what is happening within our borders. All of you, get your bonnets as quickly as possible, and we will go down to the wharves."

Soon the four were being carried along Broadway with the throng that swarmed to the waterfront. As they came near, the girls caught sight of David. He was climbing out of a small boat, which had evidently been out to the *London* and had come ashore again. He was one of a small band of young men, who were now leading a Britisher along, peacefully enough, in the direction of Fraunce's Tavern.

Very soon this group returned from the inn.

"He admitted he had tea aboard."

"The British Captain says there is tea on the vessel."

Assertions like these were coming from the crowd.

In the meantime, the eyes of the throng were intent upon something in the harbor. David Henry, whom many of the people knew, with six other men, all older than himself, was piloting the same small boat out towards the vessel again. The crowd on the shore watched tensely while those Americans pulled themselves over the side of the British ship, one by one.

Then, in the silence, came a sudden sound: "Splash! Splash!" Into the waters of New York Harbor went the opened

casks of tea, the fragrant leaves scattering far and wide on the waves.

"Well, New York has had its own tea party, as well as Boston," exclaimed David to the group which hailed him as he came ashore. Clarissa and her brothers, Sally, and Mrs. Lansing had joined the Van Dams and had been waiting impatiently for their hero.

"I wonder what the outcome of it all is going to be," said Sally, looking intently at David. "Do you know that Peter, here, tells us he has heard that the port of Boston is closed?"

"Closed!" echoed David. His smile had faded, and his face, like those of the others, was very grave.

"Mother, what can people do in times like these?"

Clarissa Morton looked up from her knitting, and laid her hands in her lap, over the half-finished stocking; but her mother did not once stop the steady "click, click" of her needles, as she answered.

"We can only do our regular duty, day by day, my daughter, and be ready for any emergency that may come. Only God knows our future. Our forbears came to this land seeking freedom to think about and worship the great Father of all, as each one understands best in his own mind; and we must guard this in the face of any trial or hardship that besets us."

"Do you think there really will be war, Mother?"

"As I have just said, Clarissa, only God knows. Your father was telling me yesterday that Mr. John Jay said to the Congress in Philadelphia that there were three ways of dealing with England: by negotiating peacefully with her, if she would; by having nothing to do with her — 'non intercourse' he called it, in his learned manner; or by war."

"And if war should come, Mother, what can women do? There are the three boys, marching and drilling. I watched Peter a long time to-day, up on the Bloomingdale Road. There is Nathan Hale, studying the arts of war. And, of course, there are David and Mr. Hamilton and their set. All the young men I know, except—"

Her mother looked up quickly, as Clarissa hesitated for just the fraction of a second, and then added, "except Charles Langley."

"And why is that?" queried her mother.

"I cannot find out. He curls his lip at the boys and the young men when they drill; and when we talk of the Congress and Mr. Jay and Mr. Livingston—even of Mr. Washington—he either keeps a sullen silence or makes fun of them."

"Makes fun of them?" echoed Mrs. Morton, whose face had assumed a troubled expression. "Clarissa, you should all shun a man like that. There is something you can do. If he finds himself scorned and set aside, he will soon come to his senses. Leave him alone! Show him he is even beneath contempt!"

"We all do leave him pretty much alone, except Sally. She seems to like him."

"Sally? Sally Lansing? I can't believe it, Clarissa. She is as true to the country as any of us."

"Oh, of course she is. I didn't mean anything like that. I love Neltje and Sally almost alike. But, Mother, she does like Charles, and she always stands up for him, and —and—it has made a little difference in our set."

"Difference? I should think it might make

a difference! I shall keep an eye on that young man, hereafter. Now, Clarissa, to work again, daughter."

Not once in this whole conversation had Mrs. Morton's fingers ceased knitting; and one glance at Clarissa's idle fingers told her the tale of her daughter's wandering thoughts.

"One thing a woman can always do, is to keep busy," said she.

"Yes, Mother," answered Clarissa, dutifully taking up her needles again.

"Perchance war should come," continued the older woman, in a calm voice, "it would mean that our men would all go to the fight. Your father is not too old, nor your brothers too young. When things like this happen, it is a woman's place to see the men of the family go, and not flinch."

"Yes, Mother," said the girl, whose face had suddenly saddened. "The twins are eighteen; but Peter, Mother, — wouldn't he be too young to go to war?"

"Peter is nearly fifteen," was the answer.

The Mortons lived very near to the spot where Broadway terminated in fields and forests. Clarissa looked out at the golden September sunshine that bathed the countryside with light. Then she looked at the clock, and her fingers flew. In less than an hour it would be time to dress for Mrs. Murray's party.

How the young people loved to gather there at Inclenberg, in the big house surrounded by fields and gardens. But no one had looked forward to this special occasion with more eagerness than quiet, home-loving Clarissa. As soon as her task of knitting was finished, she went upstairs and dressed herself in her best plum-colored dress, her bonnet, with ribbons to match, and her long black lace gloves. Kissing her mother good-bye, she set out. As she picked her way carefully along the dusty road, she heard, behind her, the rumble of the stage coach that traveled once a week to White Plains. As she stepped aside to let the cumbrous coach go by, a familiar voice called from its height:

"Clarissa! Clarissa Morton! Driver, will you please stop a moment and take her up!"

It was Sally Lansing. As the lumbering vehicle came to a stop, Clarissa clambered up beside her friend, grateful for the opportunity to ride and chat with her the rest of the way.

But no sooner had she seated herself than she became aware of the presence of Charles Langley, who had been riding in the coach with Sally.

The thought of her mother's face, as she had seen it less than two hours before, flashed to her mind. Simultaneously with the picture came the recollection of something her father had said about a friend of his, who had differed with him as to the workings of the Congress at Philadelphia.

"They that are not with us are against us. There is no middle way."

"I'll keep an eye on him," Clarissa promised herself, as she began to chatter with Sally.

When the three reached their destination, lovely Mrs. Murray was at the door, welcoming them with outstretched hands.

"Most of the party is outdoors," she explained, when they had all arrived. "September on the Hudson River is too beautiful to spend indoors. The girls will have to be careful of their pretty clothes, and you will all have to be careful of Jake's cornfield; but you are to search for red ears in the field, instead of in the barn, this afternoon. I will give you

just so much time to do it; and that will not be time enough for much damage. Now, away with you all!"

The gracious lady waved her hands. Like a flock of gay butterflies the young people swarmed out over the stubby cornfield, where the golden stalks lay on the ground, ready to be gathered in.

"There's no excitement. I don't believe there's a red ear in the field," exclaimed Alexander Hamilton. He was a great beau in this young set, and all the girls flushed and tittered at this remark.

"How conceited he is!" came a voice at Sally's elbow.

"Who is conceited, Charles?"

"That young Hamilton, of course. Everything and everybody seems to revolve around him, according to his way of thinking."

"Charles! I believe you're jealous! Only the other night David was saying that he never had known a man so gifted and clever as Alexander Hamilton, who had, at the same time, such a loving disposition."

"You've all turned his head with remarks like that," said Charles, sullenly.

"But we don't tell him such things," persisted Sally. "It's just so—that's all."

"Oh well, if you admire him so much more than you do anyone else—"

"Charles, Charles, you know I don't!" Sally's downcast face gave the young man the greatest pleasure he had had that afternoon.

Sunburned and hot and flushed and laughing, the band of merrymakers tramped back to the house, as Mrs. Murray's farm bell rang lustily from the front piazza. Neltje Van Dam had found the one big red ear in the field, and was proclaimed the belle of the occasion. All the men and maids did homage to her, as she sat on the lawn under the great maple trees.

"How Ottolene would love to live out in the country, instead of right in the town," exclaimed she, not in the least embarrassed at all the attention that was being paid her.

"She seems to be the odd little duckling among you all, doesn't she?" said Mrs. Murray.

"There is no one just her age among any of our friends," answered Neltje. "But she seems to keep happy, day in and day out, with her dolls and her doll house. And then she has a garden spot all her own. She's just like

Father, for loving to putter around among the plants."

"Nevertheless, she mustn't grow up to be too solitary," said Mrs. Murray. "And if you say she likes the country, Neltje, you must bring her out often, and she can watch the garden and the cows and the chickens to her heart's content."

"Oh, indeed, she'd love it, Mrs. Murray! I'll ask my mother to let her come."

Neltje went home that night carrying her red ear, and regaled her family, at the supper table, with all the exciting news of the party.

"Tis good to hear thy prattle, child," said her father. "I verily believe 'tis only happiness and lightness of spirit that can keep the heart strong. When I hear of thy frills and thy foibles and thy fun, I seem to feel no fear but that these Colonies will settle the affairs of our land in some good manner, and leave us free to be contented and happy for generations to come. True happiness is, without a doubt, God's greatest gift to man."

Mistress Van Dam looked about at her goodly household and beamed with delight, as she listened to these words. There was her husband, loving her and his home and his children beyond all else in the world. There was Neltje, one of the belles of the town, with her golden hair, her deep blue eyes, her bright color, and a nature and disposition as lovely as her appearance. There was Ottolene, with brilliant pink cheeks, too, and eyes as blue as gentians; with straight brown hair, and a sturdy little soul;—her baby, still adorable in her chubbiness. And there was David Henry, who had become almost a son of the house; quiet and vivacious, by turns; keen for his studies in the law; loving company and gayety; yet, above all else, burning with zeal for the Cause of the Colonies.

"Tis as God meant life to be," the sweet faced woman told herself. "A contented home, a happy family, success,—they all lead to the best in life—they are the best in life. Homes like ours are brick foundations in the building of a civilization. With each brick secure—"

"And Mother, Mrs. Murray wants Ottolene to come up to Inclenberg sometime, to spend the day. She says she can watch the chickens and the flowers—"

"Is there a nice garden?" asked the little girl.

"Is there a garden?" echoed her elder sister.
"Why, there's one that would take up all the space from here to the Battery, and all around Bowling Green."

Ottolene's round little face was one broad smile.

"But you wouldn't want to go when the tulips are out, would you?" asked David, turning to her and looking very grave.

"Mother! Mother! Could I go? Could Neltje take me?"

"Indeed she can, some day. I think it is most kind of Mrs. Murray to think of a little girl like you."

"But go this autumn, or in the winter," persisted David. "Don't go when the tulips are out. I understand Mrs. Murray has a very large bed of them."

Ottolene looked as if a very tempting piece of candy were being held just out of her reach; but she spoke with great dignity.

"When I'm big, I'm going to have a farm bigger than Mrs. Murray's, with rows and rows and rows of tulips—red and pink and yellow

— and you're not to pick one of them, David." Ottolene shook her finger angrily as she spoke.

"Tut, tut, Ottolene," said her mother reprovingly. "Remember David is older than you; and that is no way for a little girl to speak, in any case."

"Tut, tut, thyself, Mother," came from the opposite end of the table. "Let the child speak her mind. I like to see that spirit in my daughters. So is England older than we are, but—"

"Surely, sir, you are not going to liken me to our oppressors?" asked David, with a laugh.

"Never, my boy. Would that these Colonies had one hundred thousand men like you; then there would be no need for men like me to spend a moment's thought on the future."

"There are plenty of young men to do what has to be done, whatever that may prove to be," said David, with confidence.

The golden autumn passed, and winter came on, while the ire of the Colonists against England grew stronger and stronger.

Day after day, in rain, snow, cold, and sunshine, young Hamilton and his men drilled in full sight of the fort. Augustus Van Dam, going and coming from his counting-house, watched this proceeding with pride. He could always single out David because of his height.

Although he said nothing about it, Master Van Dam went out into the garden every day, before settling down before the fire with his pipe, for a diligent hour of target practice with his flintlock gun. This practice came to be an indispensable part of his well-ordered daily program. The Spring found him firing steadily over the heads of the budding tulips, while he eagerly awaited David for whatever news he might bring.

"Master Van Dam," exclaimed the latter, on one of these days. "It has been decided which of our men shall go to Congress. They who have been chosen are the ones we hoped for!"

"When does the new Congress meet?" asked Augustus, leaning on his musket.

"The day after to-morrow, April the 20th."

"And you say the men chosen to go are—"

"Francis Lewis, George Clinton, Lewis Morris, Peter Schuyler, and Robert R. Livingston. All of them have promised to attend, and they leave this evening."

"We may well trust our destinies to men like that. Hast any other news, David, from any quarter?"

"None just at this moment," answered the young man. "But one can never tell what may happen, even while we talk."

A few days later, Augustus Van Dam, having finished his daily target practice, entered the house and found Neltje and Sally in the big window seat, with their heads close together.

"What art thou two so busy about?" he asked, puffing his pipe, and drawing up close to the fireside.

"We have a new game, and we want to be able to play it real well at the next sociable," answered his daughter.

"What is it?"

"Sally's better at the idea than I am, and knows more about it. You tell, Sally."

"The game is to draw maps of different sections of New York," explained Sally. "Everybody has one of these maps, and each one tells what is going on in the quarter represented by his or her map, a prize being given to the one who shows the greatest knowledge.

And Master Van Dam, who do you suppose has been chosen the judge to decide the prize?"

"Thine own clever self, Sally, I suppose."

"No, sir! Your David Henry was elected by us all. He is considered the best-informed young gentleman in our circle."

"Ha, ha, I'll banter him about that when he comes in to-night," said Master Van Dam, with a chuckle.

"O, but Father! That will spoil all the fun," broke in Neltje. "Charles says he mustn't know of his honor until he gets to the house, for David wasn't at the meeting at which he was elected."

"Charles Langley? And what has that sullen whelp got to say about the game or anything else?"

"He only made it up—that's all," said Sally, in an aggrieved tone.

"He made it up, did he?" said Augustus. He spoke in a quieter voice than before. "And how many others like it has he planned for his friends?"

"This is the only one," said Sally, now quite happy at the interest Master Van Dam displayed. "And it's so seldom he makes any

effort to be entertaining that we want to help him all we can to make this a success." The girl did not add that she had implored Neltje to lend her vivacious interest to the game.

"It will bring Charles out and make him more like the other young men, if it succeeds," she had pleaded; and Neltje, in the sweetness of her soul, had promised to do all in her power to further the game.

"Let me see the maps," said Master Van Dam; but the sound of his voice was drowned out by a great cry from the street.

"Lexington—Concord Bridge—they tried to arrest Adams and Hancock!" came the words, between shouts and cries.

Neltje turned to her father, who was already hurrying to the street. The girls, too, rushed out, followed by Mistress Van Dam.

Broadway was one seething mass of men, headed by some of the best-known citizens of the town.

"Where are they going?" questioned the bewildered Sally.

"To the arsenal, I think," answered the older woman.

Mistress Van Dam was not mistaken. When

the crowd of men turned back up Broadway, they were all supplied with firearms. They had secured enough muskets to arm the entire throng.

There was no peace of mind in the Van Dam home, or in any other New York home, rich or poor, on that twenty-third of April in 1775. Augustus Van Dam, with many other house-holders, was in conference at Fraunce's Tavern. Mistress Van Dam, with her two children and Sally, sat by the fire, waiting for further news. Even Ottolene had not been sent to bed.

About ten o'clock, David came in, accompanied by Alexander Hamilton.

"Drusilla shall bring thee coffee and cakes at once," said the lady of the house. "But tell us without delay,—what is the full news? What has happened?"

"It reached us from Boston, this afternoon," said David. "And, as it comes to us, this is what happened. On April 18th, General Gage sent a force of eight hundred troops to Lexington. Evidently his plan was to arrest Mr. Adams and Mr. Hancock, and then capture the military stores at Concord. The British troops were rowed secretly across the Charles

River, about ten o'clock in the evening; but wise General Warren suspected something of the kind."

Here David paused for breath, and young Hamilton took up the tale.

"Do you remember a young man, named Paul Revere?" asked he.

"Indeed we do."

"Well, he was chosen, with a certain William Dawes, to warn the countryside of the coming of the troops."

Between them, the two young men finished the tale.

"William Dawes was to go by way of Roxbury, and Paul Revere by Charlestown. The latter crossed the Charles River in a small rowboat, in the very shadow of the British man-ofwar, Somerset. It had been arranged to have lights in the tower of the North Church in Boston, to inform Revere whether the British troops were coming by land or by sea."

"Thank God for all our brave men!" broke in Mistress Van Dam fervently. "But tell me, David, what of Mr. Adams and Mr. Hancock?"

"They are safe," said David. "They were

Jonas Clark; and when Paul Revere clattered up in the middle of the night, the sentries told him not to make a noise, and he told them to their faces: 'You'll soon hear noise enough. The regulars are coming.' And they do say Mr. Hancock threw up the window and ordered Paul Revere into the house."

Neltje's triumphant laugh pealed out, and Ottolene joined in. Sally looked nervous and worried.

"Does that mean real war?" she asked.

"It means that and nothing else," answered Alexander Hamilton, in his polished voice. "It is the revolt of free men against oppression."

"You call it revolt, instead of war," said Sally.

"I call it the revolution—the American Revolution," answered the young captain; and soon after this he bowed himself out of the house.

It was too late for Sally to go home at that hour without an escort, so, as was often her wont, she spent the night with Neltje.

"Do you really think the English are so un-

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generous and unfair?" she asked Neltje, as they made ready for bed.

"Why, Sally! How can you think anything else? They treat us all like children. England has her own land and her own laws; why shouldn't we? I don't even see how you can ask such a thing, Sally."

"Mother thinks just as you do, and so do I," said Sally, thoughtfully. "If we only had Father to talk to, it might be different."

"Poor Sally!" exclaimed Neltje. "You must talk to my father and to David and to Mr. Hamilton."

"The trouble is with Charles. Charles admires the English," said Sally, with a sob in her voice.

## CHAPTER IV

"Tis a hard fix, David, that the merchants of New York find themselves in to-day," exclaimed Augustus Van Dam the next evening, as the younger man busied himself with his books.

"Wise men are sometimes slow to act," came the answer. "But I believe the wisest ones to-day are those who do what has to be done, and do it quickly."

The news that the Port of Boston had been closed had acted like a brisk wind, fanning the flame of resentment in the hearts of the Sons of Liberty. The Parliament of Great Britain stood as firm as a rock, insisting that the wayward American Colonies be made to feel that they were dependent upon the mighty country overseas.

From the Earl of Dartmouth had come the actual orders to the governors of the colonies, which read as follows:

"I have it in command from the King to acquaint you that it is His Majesty's firm resolution, upon the unanimous advice of his confidential servants, to pursue such measures as shall be effectual for securing the dependence of the Colonies upon this Kingdom."

A copy of this resolution was sent to New York from England. It was printed and circulated throughout the town, and was the cause of a meeting of the patriots, twenty-four hours later, in Fraunce's Tavern. It was over these events that the two men were bending their thoughts so vigorously.

"'Twas a representative meeting," the older man declared, with satisfaction. "Think of the merchants alone who were present. They have held aloof from all these misunderstandings up to now. Indeed, in many a conversation with those of them whom I know well, they have had hard and bitter things to say against that band of thine; but now they are willing to meet and confer with them. David, I believe the time is perhaps not far distant when we all—all who love our land and our freedom—will come under that head—the Sons of Liberty."

The young fellow sprang to his feet and grasped the older man's hands in both of his.

"So, and so only, can we win. And by standing together we will win in the end, sir. There can be no doubt of that."

So it was that the two different parties—one impulsive, reckless, and determined; the other thoughtful, conservative, and deliberate—met on May 16th, in the well-known tavern, to discuss the part New York should play in the great struggle for Liberty.

The "moderates," as the older men were called, were, without doubt, the leaders in this assemblage. Their candidate, Isaac Low, was elected chairman of the meeting. The young and fiery band to which David, the Mortons, the Pauldings, and the Van Wycks belonged proposed a list of twenty-five names for a committee. The thoughtful conservatives approved the suggestion, but favored increasing the number to fifty, — twenty-three from the names the Sons of Liberty had chosen, and twenty-seven from the older group.

"We need four more of us to balance all the wild ways of you boys," Augustus had ex-

plained to the group that gathered around him after the meeting.

To the satisfaction of both parties, the name of gentle and well-loved Francis Lewis was added to the group, and thus was formed the "Committee of Fifty-One," which was to become famous in the political life of the town. There were widely differing opinions in those ranks, but there was a unity of purpose that bound the men together for many months thereafter.

"The merchants of New York are ever more broad-minded than those Bostonians, who can see but one way, and that the one right before their noses," continued Master Van Dam, that same evening. He himself, it must be confessed, the prosperous owner of a counting-house, seldom saw much farther than the expanse of water bordering on Bowling Green. "Now think of the wisdom of those whom we saw and talked with at that meeting. They plan, instead of boycotting everything from over the sea and leaving us poor in pocket, that we simply import articles not subject to tax. What thinkest thou of that scheme, David? Is it not wisdom and forethought and clever-

ness like that that will make our town great and wealthy some day?"

"Tis pure sagacity, sir, and no mistake," answered David. His own speech was becoming a mixture of Dutch and English, as a result of having lived so long with these New Yorkers. "It may be that Boston goes too far in her opposition. It may be that New York does not go far enough. But far above states of mind, far above what is best for the present, the question is asked—not of New York, or of Boston, or of Philadelphia—but of all the United Colonies:—'Shall our Land be free?'"

"Thou art a true patriot, David. Thy thoughts run a greater distance than mine are able to do."

In the meantime, hot-headed, grievously insulted Boston was carrying her quarrel with Great Britain with a high hand. Parliament was punishing her severely for asserting her rights, as a free commonwealth, to carry on trade in her own fashion; and now she was requesting her pleasure-loving, aristocratic sister, New York, to join her in having no intercourse whatever with England. The ties which bound the Colonies were becoming very strong.

As Augustus Van Dam had explained, the level-headed merchants of New York meant to hold their tempers as far as possible, for the sake of trade. They hoped to keep the principle of "no taxation without representation" unimpaired, while still maintaining a brisk trade in commodities, the sale of which meant comfort and pleasure to them and to their families.

The paramount question for the Committee of Fifty-One to settle was whether or not New York should join hands with Boston in her extreme measures. After talking over the matter with Master Van Dam for the space of an hour or more, David put his books away, and went out to keep an appointment with Alexander Hamilton.

This extraordinary young man was coming more and more to the fore in New York. Indeed, he was becoming known all over the Colonies, and David regarded as a rare treat every conversation he had with him. The two met in the Merchant's Coffee House. No sooner had David Henry caught sight of the familiar slender figure, than the latter drew a paper from his pocket.

"What is that?" asked David.

"It is the answer to Boston's plea," answered Hamilton. "I have procured a copy to keep. Great steps are being taken by civilization these days, and you and I are eye witnesses of the action." He held out the paper, and David read:

## "GENTLEMEN:

"The alarming Measures of the British Parliament relative to your ancient and respectable Town, which has so long been the Seat of Freedom, fills the Inhabitants of this City with inexpressible Concern; as a Sister Colony suffering in Defense of the Rights of America, we consider your Injuries as a Common Cause, to the Redress of which it is equally our Duty and our Interest to contribute. But what ought to be done in a Situation so truly critical, while it employs the anxious Thoughts of every Generous Mind, is very hard to be determined. Our Citizens have thought it necessary to appoint a large Committee consisting of fifty-one Persons to correspond with our Sister Colonies on this and every other Matter of publick Moment, and at ten o'clock this Forenoon we were first assembled. Your Letter enclosing the Vote of the Town of Boston, and the Letter of your Committee of Confidence, were immediately taken into Consideration. While

we think you justly entitled to the Thanks of your Sister Colonies, for asking their Advice on a Case of such extensive Consequences, we lament our Inability to relieve your Anxiety by a decisive Opinion. The Cause is general and concerns a whole Continent who are equally interested with you and us; and we foresee that no Remedy can be of avail unless it proceed from the joint Act and Approbation of all. From a virtuous and spirited Union much may be expected, while the feeble Efforts of a few will only be attended with Mischief and Disappointment to themselves, and Triumph to the Adversaries of our Liberty. Upon these Reasons we conclude that a Congress Deputies from the Colonies in general is of the utmost Moment; and that it ought to be assembled without Delay and form some unanimous Resolutions in this fatal Emergency, not only respecting your deplorable Circumstances, but for the Secret of our Common Rights. Such being our Sentiments, it must be premature to pronounce any Judgement on the Expedient which you have suggested. We beg, however, that you will do us the Justice to believe that we shall continue to act with a firm and becoming Regard to American Freedom, and shall coöperate with our Sister Colonies in every Measure which shall be thought salutary and conducive to the publick Good.

"We have nothing to add but that we sincerely condole with you in your unexampled Distress; and to request your speedy Opinion of the proposed Congress, that if it should meet with your Approbation we may exert our utmost Endeavors to carry it into Execution.

"We are with much Respect, Gentlemen,

"Your most Hbl. Servants.

"By Order of the Committee.
"Isaac Low, Chairman.

"ALEXANDER MACDOUGALL,
JAMES DUANE,
JOHN JAY.
To the Committee of
Correspondence
In Boston."

David read slowly and carefully, weighing in his mind each word of these men whose opinions he regarded with the greatest respect. The names at the end of the document represented the finest calibre of intelligence in New York. And he knew, as every thoughtful man knew, that in their wise and conservative fashion they were Sons of Liberty, as truly as were the shouting youths whose resistance against the outrages of England burst into flame at the slightest instigation.

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"New York believes in going over things very carefully," he said.

Young Hamilton's face was radiant, as he replied:

"New York dreams of a United band of States, which shall no longer be the colonial possessions of a country of the old world. She sees New York and Rhode Island and Massachusetts and Virginia and the other Colonies - not each one striving for its own rights in a feeble unassisted way; but a federation of these, and of other principalities which will doubtless arise on the great western borders of America. She sees these all bound together in protection of their rights and their people, and in the furtherance of good government. New York believes in these Colonies acting as one; and who knows but that out of the many settlements one Country shall be born in this new world—a Nation that shall be our own!"

"Hamilton! You mean a land of our own, with laws we make ourselves,—a land with a Flag we shall call our own?"

"I mean that and nothing else," came the answer. "That is the idea that has been born

and is growing in the minds of men like those on the committee who have written and signed this paper;—a new land, with laws of its own making, with coin bearing its own superscription, and, as you say, with a Flag of its own."

The sociable to which Neltje and Sally had looked forward with so much pleasure was held at the latter's home. All the young set had been invited. The alarm of war; the startling news from Boston, which was actually under siege; the ever-deepening indignation of the Colonists; — none of these things could daunt the spirit of these gay young men and women, nor spoil their quest for fun.

Only David Henry was late for the party. After waiting for almost an hour for the judge of the game to arrive, it was decided to begin the festivities of the evening. The carefully measured maps of New York were spread out upon the wide table in the dining-room, and each guest in turn aired his or her knowledge of what went on in the different parts of the city.

"Here is Ottolene's school; and here is the house where I take my harpsichord lessons,"

said Neltje, putting small marks on her map to mark the places.

Besides the maps, each one had been given a sheet of foolscap paper, upon which was to be written all that the individual knew of any particular house or vicinity.

"Give full accounts," Charles had directed. In conducting this pastime he was apparently in his element, for the attention which the interest in his game had brought him had caused a flush of pleasure to overspread his usually pale cheeks.

"Well," said Neltje, looking up from her foolscap and gurgling with laughter, "how will this do?" And she read:

"'Music master, a disagreeable old gentleman, who sides with Parliament against the Colonies. Think I will stop taking music lessons."

"Good!" exclaimed Charles, warming to her wit, and marking on his own map the spot where stood the shipping office in which he was employed as a clerk. Against this he wrote: "Drafty spot. Think of moving to office on opposite side of the street."

Much that the young people wrote was sheer

nonsense; but most of the maps showed a very clear knowledge of what was going on in the city, and the accounts were highly colored with the patriotic views of these young Americans.

"Shop of Hugh Gaine, the Tory printer, who sells everything from pumice stone to razors," read one.

"A favorite meeting place of — No—" and Clarissa suddenly closed her mouth and lifted her pencil from the spot to which it was pointing.

"Meeting-place of whom,—the Sons of Liberty?" asked Charles.

"Yes," answered the girl. "But I'm not going to tell anybody."

"And how do you know?" asked the young man.

"My brothers told me," said the girl guardedly.

"I'm thinking of joining," said Charles.
"The Sons of Liberty have always been a little too boisterous for me, but these are not the days to hold back from anything."

"Indeed they are not!" came from Peter Morton, the youngest of the family. "If you would join the Sons of Liberty, Charles, and

get out and fight, you wouldn't have such a pale face."

Clarissa was unable to chide her young brother for having uttered this thought. Charles had brought it on himself, holding aloof as he had done. A little sharp talk might stir him out of his lethargy. Perhaps, after all, they had misjudged him. He could be interested when he chose. He certainly was the life of the party to-night. This game seemed to appeal to his imagination, and he did not appear hurt at Peter's words.

"Perhaps I may join, Peter," said he.
"What would be the nearest meeting-place for me, and when and how often do they gather?"

"Let's see — you live on the corner of Pearl Street, don't you? Well, there's a thriving band that meets each night in an old warehouse by the river. I'll take you any time you want to go."

"Thanks, Peter. Indeed I do want to go, and I'll let you know the first free night I have, which I think will be soon."

The game progressed, with no sign of David.

"Did he say anything about not coming?" asked Sally.

"No," answered Neltje. "We had a little argument about the time. I told him I knew it was to-night, but he thought I was mistaken, and I told him you had seen me and had invited me by word of mouth."

"I sent the men written invitations, so there surely can be no mistake," said Sally.

The evening wore on, and still David failed to appear. The young people were disappointed, for it had been announced that two handsome prizes would be awarded for the best maps, and they were impatient to have their work judged.

"No one knows quite so much about the city as David, even men who were born here," said one of the guests. "He remembers everything he ever learns."

Finally, the question arose: "Who shall judge the maps?"

"Why, Charles!" announced Neltje. "He ought to judge them. It's his game."

"But just because I thought of it is no reason why I should be the judge."

"But you certainly can tell who did the best work."

"The question is: is my knowledge correct?

If some one will go over the plans with me, I'll do my best."

"I'll try. I'll warrant I can help," volunteered Peter with great enthusiasm, and Charles eagerly accepted his assistance.

When the maps had been examined it was announced that Peter had won the men's prize—a handsome writing-case. The guests all applauded when the girl's prize went to Neltje, for she was a favorite with young and old.

"This handkerchief case is beautiful, and it's all been a lovely party. You're to be congratulated, dear," said Neltje, as she bade Sally good night. The latter was glowing with happiness and enthusiasm, and Neltje knew that the sparkle in her eye and the rose on her cheek came from the fact that the success of the evening had been chiefly due to the efforts of her friend, Charles.

"There wasn't a dull moment during the whole evening," declared Neltje at the breakfast table the next morning, continuing the conversation she had begun with Ottolene upstairs.

"When was this?" asked David.

"At Sally's party last night. I wish you hadn't missed it, but you're such a busy man."

"But I was far from busy last night, Neltje. I could have gone."

"But, David! Didn't you remember what I told you about the date?"

"Yes, I remembered, and I went so far as to look at my written invitation, and the date was for to-night. I can vouch for it."

The young man took Sally's dainty note from his pocket and handed it to Neltje.

"You're right," she said in a disappointed tone, handing it back to him. "What a sad face Sally will make when she hears that she has made a mistake like that. She's generally as accurate as her handwriting is clear."

"She does write beautifully," agreed David, unfolding the sheet again out of sheer admiration.

As he held it in the morning light, however, his brow knitted, and he bent over the paper thoughtfully.

"What did you do that caused so much fun?" he asked a moment later, as he replaced the sheet in his pocket.

"We drew maps of the city—Father has seen some of them—and then told all we knew about the different sections. Little Peter Mor-

ton knew every nook and corner where things are happening."

"Call not a man who can shoot as well as Peter 'little'," spoke Augustus Van Dam reprovingly, "whatever his years may be." The boy was a great favorite with the older man.

"And he is nearly sixteen, at that," broke in Mistress Van Dam.

But David's eyes were fixed on Neltje. "And what became of those maps when the game was over?" he asked.

"I really cannot say, David. You see, you were to have been the judge. Sally and I planned that when we first heard about this game that Charles suggested. And then, when you didn't come, we urged him to take your place, and he said he would if Peter would help him."

"And Peter did?" asked David, his voice rather strained.

"Why, yes,—of course. I'm sorry you are disappointed, David. Sally will be—"

"Never mind Sally, Neltje. Tell me,—are the papers still at her house?"

"I think they are, if the serving-maid hasn't cleared them away as rubbish."

Without another word David rose and left the table. Neltje felt rather abashed at his abrupt manner.

"Take no notice, child," said her father. Any bit of displeasure or unhappiness that fell to his elder daughter's lot seemed to fall with double weight upon him. "David seems to have much on his mind to-day."

"Oh, I know, Father; but he seemed so short over poor Sally's simple mistake."

"I have a wonderful piece of news for you girls," said Mistress Van Dam, troubled in her turn to see Neltje unhappy, and glad of any excuse to divert her daughter's mind from her troubles. "I heard yesterday that Nathan Hale has been made Captain of a Company in the Connecticut Brigade, which has been dispatched to New York. That will add another welcome member to your set. We must do all we can to keep the young men in high spirits these days. 'Tis no wonder any one of them is out of sorts, with no one knowing what the days will bring."

Neltje's heart smote her to think that she had even noticed David's manner. But she had no chance to make amends, for he had hurried

from the table and was walking quickly in the direction of the Lansings' house.

Miranda, who opened the door, stared in amazement to see one of the young men calling at this early hour. At David's request, however, she called Miss Sally, who came out of the breakfast room smiling.

"Come in, David, and have a bite of breakfast, and give an account of what kept you away last night."

"No—no, thank you. I have just had my breakfast. Sally,—it is about the party last night. I would have been here, but for this. I confess it is not very mannerly to show it to you, but see," and he held out the letter she had sent to him.

"The wrong date? Why, it can't be! I can't believe I did such a thing. Why, David, some one has been playing a joke. It—it must have been Charles. He insisted upon helping me with the invitations. He really has a lot of fun in him when you know him well. Don't you see? Some one has carefully changed the date? Oh, these jealous young men!"

Sally was a born coquette, and all her charm was at its bloom this morning.

"Do you think so?" asked David, leaning over and appearing to examine what he had discovered twenty minutes before. "Well, I suppose what can't be cured must be endured. I'm sorry I missed all the fun. It must have taken wits, too, to make those maps. I'd like to see them, Sally, if I may."

"You should have them all to look at, but Charles took every one of them home. I was going to have them destroyed, but he said that he would like to keep them as mementos of his first social success in New York."

Sally was startled at the expression that came over David's face.

"He still lives in the same lodgings, does he not?" asked the young man, clutching his hat.

"Yes, David," answered Sally in a frightened tone.

The young soldier's face softened as he looked at her, and he laid down his hat.

"Sally," he said, "these are times which try our souls; and, as women's are ever more sensitive than men's, theirs must be the fiercer hurt. Sally, you love your Land?"

"As I do life itself, David."

<sup>&</sup>quot;And the great Cause of Liberty?"

"I do, I do, David; even in the face of what some of my best friends seem to think."

"Sally, a soldier never knows when a sword will run him through. Can you stand a wound sharper than a sword thrust?"

"David! I cannot understand you," cried the girl.

"Sally, I must make you understand. You are brave. Listen! Charles Langley has been suspected for many weeks of being in league with the British, and of acting as one of their spies here in New York. There have been many acts half traced to him; but here is a barefaced plot that has so far succeeded. In your unsuspecting merrymaking he has laid a trap for all your set, and out of your knowledge of your city he has gained access to the hidden network which the patriots have laid beneath their barracks."

The color faded from Sally's cheeks as she listened, but she neither moved nor spoke.

"Only this remains. Langley fears and hates me. I could take those papers from him only by force, for he would know why I wanted them. Sally, it is for you—playing the part of the comrade you were last night—to re-

trieve the papers. If they are not returned in a short time, we can vouch for British spies in every corner where the Americans meet in New York City, and a knowledge of all our plans among the troops of the enemy. Will you do this Sally, for the Cause of Liberty?"

"David, I would do anything! But you don't know—you don't understand! Charles—"

"Yes, I do understand, Sally," said David.
"That is the sword thrust for you. If I have asked too much, tell me so. I well know that should I appear in that lodging-house this morning those innocent maps would disappear as if by magic. They would go on their harmful way, and our side would never see them. Speak, Sally. There is no time to be lost. Will you do this?"

"Do you mean now—at once?"

"As soon as possible. Arrange another party for to-night, and say that you need the maps. Go, before he gives them away. I can trust you, Sally. Is it 'yes' or 'no'?"

"Yes," said the girl; and David bent over her hand in the fashion of the day, and left without another word.

For an instant Sally stood with clenched

hands. Then she donned her bonnet and her cape.

"Sally, where are you going this hour of the morning?" called her mother from upstairs, where she breakfasted in bed each day.

"I am just going out on an errand, Mother.
I'll tell you about it when I come back."

Sally held her cloak tightly around her as she left the house in haste.

"Charles a spy—a traitor to the Cause! David must be mistaken."

But she brushed these thoughts from her mind, for her face must not reveal the slightest trace of agitation.

The house in which Charles lived was kept by a kindly widow, who had been left with an only daughter. This daughter, Julie de Veaux, was a great friend of Sally's, and it was through her that she had become acquainted with Charles Langley.

"I must feign a visit to Julie," she told herself as she went up the steps. But suddenly it occurred to her that Julie was away. Her heart sank, but she knocked on the door and waited.

"Is Mistress deVeaux in?" she asked of the weary-looking man who answered her knock.

"No, Miss Sally. She went out to the market about five minutes ago."

"Well, I'll wait, if I may."

"Yes, Miss Sally. Right in here."

"Oh no, don't open the parlor door for me.
I'll wait right here."

"Just as you say, Miss Sally."

As the man disappeared into a remote part of the house, Sally bent her head to listen for any sound that might come. From the room above there came the hum of men's voices. Without a moment's hesitation she ran upstairs and knocked gently on the door. It was immediately opened, and there stood Charles Langley, looking very much surprised.

"Sally Lansing!"

"Oh, Charles!" she exclaimed, shrinking back a little. "Could I see Julie for a moment?"

"But Julie isn't here, Sally."

"Isn't here? I heard voices, and I came up. You say she isn't here?"

"No, Sally. There are only two of my friends here. You're not afraid of a redcoat, are you?"

The girl's heart sank. She felt somewhat

dazed as Charles led her into the room and introduced her to two British soldiers.

"Won't we do in place of Julie, fair Mistress Sally?" asked one of them, as they were introduced.

"I must play the part," the girl was telling herself, again and again.

As the soldiers spoke, she tossed her head and arched her eyebrows with all the witchery she possessed.

"Do you know Julie, my soldier friend?" she asked.

"Aye, we know her well, but she does not hold a candle to you for style and prettiness," said the second Britisher.

"Sh!" whispered Charles; but Sally pretended not to hear. Her pretty feet were quaking in her slippers, and she wondered what she was going to do. She half closed her eyes in a pretended indifference, and appeared to be leaving the room.

Those bright eyes, however, peering through the half-closed lids, had seen on the table the maps that had been made at her house the evening before.

"Please tell Julie I came to ask her if she

would come to supper with me to-morrow. And Charles, if you haven't destroyed those papers we had for the game last night, could I take them to show to my mother? She was vastly interested last night, after you had all gone, when I told her what we had been doing. Why, here they are! May I take them?"

Sally's eyes were wide open now, and she picked up the roll of maps casually, as though she had just seen them.

"Sally, those are very cleverly done. I was looking them over again this morning. Far from destroying them, I should like to keep them."

"Is that the map game you were telling us about when we first came in?" drawled one of the soldiers.

"Yes," answered Charles. "This young lady here is a prime hostess, let me tell you. You should have been with us last night."

"But it was your idea, Charles," insisted Sally in her most graceful manner. "May I take them, or am I asking too much?"

Sally's sweet voice sank to a childish pout which Charles could not resist.

"Of course, Sally, you may have them. Take

them back for your mother to see, but let me have them again this afternoon, won't you?"

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed the girl, looking down carelessly at the maps in her hand. "And don't forget to give Julie my message."

With this, she curtised herself out of the door, and went slowly downstairs.

"The wench didn't promise to give them back, I notice," observed the taller of the soldiers to Charles, as Sally disappeared.

"Her mind is on nothing but feminine whims and fancies," answered Charles pompously. "We'll have those papers in our hands again before night. See if we don't! What if I had opposed her?"

"There'd have been a rumpus," agreed the others.

A few moments later Sally burst into her mother's room, and was on her knees before the fireplace before the lady in bed knew what was happening.

"What are you doing, Sally? You'll set yourself on fire, child."

"No, Mother. Wait!"

Her bonnet and cloak were not removed until the girl had seen her roll of maps reduced to



Sally was on her knees before the fireplace.--Page 118.



ashes. Then she threw herself down beside her mother's bed and sobbed out the whole story.

"My brave daughter, my brave daughter," said her mother again and again, as she smoothed the silky brown hair. "You have used your woman's wit for the Great Cause." Then, suddenly changing her tone, she said:

"Now dry those eyes quickly, Sally. We want no red lids to welcome General Washington. Your red dress and your hat with the feather are ready. Now I must hurry, myself, to see to the creases in my best gown."

#### CHAPTER V

Charles Langley's knock at the door of the Lansing house that afternoon was unanswered.

He well knew what was taking place in the city that day, and how the crowds were collecting to welcome General Washington to New York. It was a moment of great concern to all those who sympathized with England. The Colonial forces had mobilized, had formed an American Army, and had elected a Commander-in-Chief, who was now on his way to take official command at Boston.

"Who is this man, George Washington?" was the question that greeted Charles when he returned to his two British comrades that afternoon. He had attributed his inability to regain the maps to the fact that all New York had gone down to Colonel Lispenard's wharf to attend the celebration and welcoming ceremonies.

"It may be well for the cause of England not to belittle him," answered Charles, who, in his peculiar desultory manner, had gained a comprehensive understanding of politics and men in the Colonies.

"To begin with, George Washington has been a trained soldier in His Majesty's own forces. As a very young man he was made a colonel, and was entrusted with many daring errands in our encounters with the French in this land. And he served as a brilliant soldier under Braddock on the Ohio. But now, this fever in the Colonies has turned him against the mother country."

"Why," continued the young man, secretly very pleased at the rapt attention of the British soldiers, "it is commonly reported that when the port of Boston was closed he declared in great anger: 'I will raise one thousand men, enlist them at my own expense, and march at their head to the relief of Boston.' And it is common talk that he said he wished to God the liberties of America were to be determined by a single combat between himself and King George."

Charles paused for breath; but the redcoated soldiers felt it their duty to learn more about this man whose name seemed to be on

everyone's lips. Moreover, whether he was for or against them, tales of such a soldier thrilled them.

"Suppose we all go down and see the ceremonies of his arrival, even though at a distance?" suggested Charles. But the British soldiers would not listen to this.

"It does not become His Majesty's troops to countenance the presence of the rebel," declared the older of the two. "But Langley, since we have nothing to do this afternoon, suppose you tell us more about this man, George Washington."

"Yes," echoed the other soldier. "It is knowledge we should have, if, as you say, England may find that she is forced to reckon with him some day."

"Reckon with him some day!" exclaimed Charles. "When will you understand? England is reckoning with him now! Did I not tell you that the troops of the Colonies have formed themselves into what they call an 'American Army'! There are many all around us who have the impudence to call themselves 'Americans', though some were born on English soil; and there are others, like

this General Washington, who are directly descended from English stock."

"Tell us about the man himself," demanded the soldiers, ignoring completely Charles's reference to an opposing army.

"I am told that his ancestors came over in the early days of the Virginia settlement and took root there in true English fashion. They loved the soil, bought great tracts of land, and improved them to the best of their ability. Lord Fairfax, himself, trained George Washington as a surveyor, and had him measure thousands of his acres. They say that he knows the American forests like an Indian, and that the lay of the land is like a familiar book to him. He has been reared in the English fashion, though. Even his home down there in Virginia, Mount Vernon, was named after the English admiral of a generation ago."

"Then why this nonsense about resisting England?" questioned one of the listeners. British soldiers like these, who had been stationed in the city for only a few weeks, knew very little about affairs in the new land. Since coming to New York, these two had followed the strict military rule of their superiors, and

they could find in the city, without displaying any great interest in political affairs. The episode of the maps had opened their eyes more widely than anything else to the fact that there were things to be reckoned with in the city. The seething rebellion against England had only touched them to a minor degree, until today. Now, like thunder crashing out of a clear sky, came the news of the Colonies in arms.

The two swung their legs contentedly, nevertheless, and bade Charles continue.

"How did this General Washington get himself at the head of these troops?"

"You would have to go to my friend, David Henry, or to Captain Alexander Hamilton, to gain the full history of it," replied Charles, curling his lip disdainfully. "They could tell you the whole story, if the spirit moved them. I can only give you scattered parts, but here they are. These Colonists have held two meetings of what they are pleased to call the 'Continental Congress.' They were held for no other purpose than to discuss ways and means of withstanding English 'oppression' and dealing with Great Britain."

"What!" ejaculated one of the redcoats. "Deal with England? Let them see how England will deal with them!"

"That is not to the point," answered cool-witted Charles, who seemed admirably capable of controlling his temper. "Perhaps the Colonies were taxed a little unfairly;—they never have forgotten that. And now this idea of governing themselves has become a downright mania with them."

"But politics are not our affair," protested one of the men. "Back to George Washington, Langley."

"As I was saying," continued Charles coolly, "there have been two meetings of this Continental Congress, composed of delegates from every one of the thirteen colonies, who all seem to act as one now, after many individual outbreaks against the King of England. For instance, that excitable man, Patrick Henry, actually declared a state of war between Virginia and England at the Richmond convention not long ago. And only four weeks after that came the battle at Lexington, Massachusetts. You surely both know about that."

"Not very much," answered one of the

soldiers. "And after all, what is there to know—except that there was a skirmish between His Majesty's troops and a band of farmers? Langley, you think too long and seriously about matters like these."

"You may call those men of Lexington 'farmers.' That they were, without a doubt; but they knew how to fight; and one must admit that they, and others like them, keep their eyes and ears open to what is happening. Well, when word went around that the King's regulars were going to capture the military supplies—"

"Military supplies!" shouted one of the listeners. "Whose military supplies?"

"The military supplies collected by the colonial troops of Boston," explained Charles. When the two had swallowed their surprise, and were listening again, he continued: "At Concord, they were set upon by these same farmers, and were driven back to their quarters in Boston, with—" and here the face of the narrator grew very grave—"a loss of three hundred men."

<sup>&</sup>quot;How did you learn all this?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Such news travels fast. This was on the

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nineteenth of April; and on the night of the twentieth, the same thing happened down in Virginia. A force of His Majesty's marines landed from a sloop in the James River, to take the gunpowder stored at Williamsburg. You see how these Colonists are hiding their war supplies everywhere. They have to be watched incessantly."

- "And what happened there?"
- "The Virginians, in turn, sprang to arms, and what do you suppose they demanded in their impudence?"
  - "What?"
- "That same Captain Patrick Henry, at the head of a body of armed militia, made the royal troops pay for the powder they had taken!"

The soldiers sputtered.

"Every colony of the thirteen is up and doing in some way or other," continued Charles. "How England will handle them remains to be seen. On the very day that this second Congress met, didn't a somebody calling himself Ethan Allen walk into the open gates of our great fort, Ticonderoga, up in that cold region, Vermont, with another band of farmers and countrymen, all carrying their muskets,

and calmly say that 'in the Name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress' he would take the fort? They stop at nothing. England will have to treat them with a firm hand."

At this point there came the sound of quick marching feet, and the three men sprang to the window to see what was happening.

One hundred men in uniform were marching briskly down Broadway, led by a slight young fellow, almost boyish in his appearance.

"It is that conceited Alexander Hamilton, with what he is pleased to call his 'company'," exclaimed Charles with a sneer. "He is evidently going down to the wharf, thinking he will impress the Commander-in-Chief with his fine appearance."

"Nevertheless, his men know how to march," agreed the soldiers. After all, a soldier was a soldier, and these two knew little else beyond the various military formations which they had been taught.

"Well," continued Charles, anxious that his flow of talk should not be interrupted for too long, "that brings us to the second meeting of this Congress I told you about. If you didn't know it before, let me tell you now that every one of the thirteen colonies has a band of men ready to fight His Majesty's troops. Why, I was told the other day that Boston alone has sixteen thousand troops. That second Congress met to select a leader for these troops, and they chose this Washington. They say he attended as a representative from Virginia, in the uniform of a colonel. I understand he does not talk overmuch, nor put himself in the fore of things. But in all the plans of that Congress to muster an army, to fortify different places, to get supplies, and the like, they turned to him, and to him alone.

"It was Mr. John Adams, I am told, who actually named George Washington. Adams is a man who has been of infinite trouble to His Majesty's Government,—he and his whole family. At any rate, he moved that the Continental Congress adopt—that was his very word—"adopt" the Army at Cambridge; and he expressed the opinion that there was but one gentleman who was fitted for its command. Then he named Colonel George Washington."

Here Charles drew a sheet of paper from his pocket, and read:

"'I have but one gentleman in mind for this great office; a gentleman very well known to all of us; a gentleman whose skill and experience as an officer, whose independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character would command the approbation of all America, and unite the cordial exertions of all the colonies better than any other person."

"Why do you write down such things as that? What is that for, anyway?" asked one of the soldiers.

"This paper belongs in my collection of useful knowledge. It may be of great value to me some day," answered their companion.

The two asked him no more questions about his personal affairs. It was always hard to understand this clever, but vague, Charles Langley.

"Well, what happened then?"

"Then this man Washington started to ride all the way from Philadelphia to Cambridge on horseback, to take command of the Army, as they call that conglomeration of ploughboys and blacksmiths. It was a clever trick they played—choosing a gentleman like that. For they do say that all the people look up to him.—And," added Charles, "he is stopping here in

New York to-day, on his way thither. That is what all the commotion is about."

Charles Langley was, no doubt, a person of divided interests. As a result of his task of keeping in touch with what was going on among the patriots, he had acquired a feeling of admiration for that group of intense young Americans among whom he moved in a social way. Of course, he was jealous of Captain Hamilton and David Henry; but he envied, with all his soul, their bravery and their keen intelligence, which had captured the imaginations of the young ladies and had won the admiration of their fellows.

It was considered a mark of distinction among them to belong to the Sons of Liberty. It was not only to gain valuable knowledge that Charles had welcomed Peter Morton's invitation to join him at one of their meeting-places. It was a means of satisfying his vanity, as well.

For several reasons Charles had not referred, in his talk with the soldiers, to the celebration of the news of the Battle of Lexington, by these same Sons of Liberty; nor had he told how the little force of British regulars had remained within the precincts of Fort George, while the

rejoicing spent itself in the streets; nor how, by command of the Royal Governor, it had been forbidden to interfere with the wild rebellion. These men, holding orders from overseas, were still bound to the policy of least resistance in New York, though some of them had already begun to question how long this policy would prove efficient.

"So, then, there is really an American Army!" exclaimed one of the soldiers, sneeringly. "And that army has what it calls a leader. Has this wonderful piece of humanity ever been in New York before to-day?"

"I have heard that he came here three years ago to put his young stepson in school," answered Charles. "Master Van Dam has both met and talked with him."

Down at Colonel Lispenard's Wharf a great crowd had gathered.

The Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, accompanied by Philip Schuyler and Charles Lee, was on his way from Philadelphia. A committee of several well-known men had already crossed to the Jersey shore, where they were to go as far as Newark to meet General

Washington and escort him across the water.

The June sun shone down upon the eager, watching multitude. The grounds around the Lispenard house were thronged with people. The air was vibrant with tense excitement.

Up on the piazza were Mrs. Lansing and Sally; Mistress Van Dam and Neltje and Ottolene; Mrs. Morton and Clarissa; and many other wives and daughters of New York. Their men were scattered among the uniformed troops on the shore, standing in solid rank to receive their Chief.

There was Captain Hamilton's group, with David Henry in the fore. There were the eight companies of the militia of the city, among whose rigid ranks were to be seen such figures as the Morton twins, Peter, Herbert Van Wyck, and Augustus Van Dam. On the outskirts of the crowd was a phaëton, to which were harnessed two snow-white horses, which waited to carry New York's famous visitor through the streets of the cheering city.

At last, the barge came in sight, and the church-bells began to ring. As it drew near, the crowd along the shore set up a mighty shout, while the bells rang out a deafening peal.

In the fore of the barge was a guard of soldiers, attired in black felt hats, buckskin breeches, red waistcoats, and blue coats faced with buff. For one instant these men stood at attention. Then they marched briskly ashore.

A tall, powerful figure followed them. George Washington was dressed in buff and blue, too, and he carried a sword at his side. On his face was a look of infinite wisdom.

David Henry had been deeply occupied in all that had been going on that day. Indeed, so swiftly had events moved during the last few days that he had had little intercourse with the gay young set of whom he was so fond. The social was the one affair which he might have attended, and now he was anxious beyond measure to know the outcome of Sally's attempt to restore the maps.

When the festivities of welcome to General Washington were over, it was far too late to go to the Lansings' home, so he was obliged to content himself with a visit to the coffee house, where a number of the Sons of Liberty were gathered.

"There is ample guard around the General,

"More than ample. The finest soldiers in the city are near him, taking turns in guarding his very shadow," answered David, sitting down among three or four friends, among whom happened to be Peter Morton.

"Was there ever a man like him before!" the boy exclaimed. His face was white with excitement.

"God be praised that such a man has been raised up to guide us!" ejaculated David, by way of reply. Then, turning to the boy, of whom he was very fond, he queried: "Then you think General Washington looks like a great soldier, Peter?"

"The very sight of him, his face, his walk, the way he holds himself, the way he speaks,—these are with me all the time," exclaimed the boy. "How long do you suppose he will stay in New York, David?"

"Captain Hamilton seems to think he will not be here long. He must hurry on to take command of the big army that Boston has raised; and as all the colonies are now one, Peter, that means, of course,—as they ex-

pressed it in the Continental Congress—of all the Colonial troops. Captain Hamilton also says that he will probably leave General Philip Schuyler in charge of our troops here."

"Then New York will have a General of its own!"

"Yes," answered David. "You seem to be highly pleased at that, Peter."

The boy flushed at the bantering tone. Why did the older folks always try to tease him whenever they talked to him, and when he was trying so hard to be a man? Sixteen was grown up, after all. Captain Hamilton was no older when he first began drilling his company down at the Battery.

His heart bounded with satisfaction, however, when David turned to him with an air of confidence.

"Tell me, Peter, were you at Sally Lansing's party last night?"

"Yes, I was. And a grand good time we had. I won the men's prize."

"Good for you! What were some of the games you played?"

"We played only one game."

Peter told, with great enthusiasm, of the

making of the maps and of the large part he had played in the merrymaking.

"I tell you," he said "I feel sorry for that fellow, Charles Langley. He doesn't know how to act among people. He's awkward and queer. So, when he became interested in my map and in what we fellows were doing, I told him where our next meeting would be, and asked him to join the Sons of Liberty. It's—"

But Peter Morton was not allowed to go any farther in his analysis of the character of Charles Langley; for David had grasped him by the shoulders and was talking to him in a manner in which Peter had never heard him speak before.

"Peter Morton! You young fool! Don't you know that now, above all times, no mention must be made of our band, or what they do, or where they hold their meetings; not to anyone, unless by his words and actions we know of a surety that he is one of us! Do you know that Charles Langley is a spy, a British spy? Do you know that he used cunning devices to keep me away from that gathering last night, so that he could gain information about the city and the doings of the patriots from you

unsuspecting folk? Even now, those maps may be in the hands of Governor Tryon; and he and his military advisers may be examining them and laying plans by which all our best efforts may be frustrated!"

"Oh, David!" breathed the boy, in anguish. "I didn't think Charles was that! David, tell me what I can do."

"Nothing can be done until to-morrow. I trust that Sally has recovered the papers. But if, by any chance, she was not able, I shall depend upon you, Peter."

"Oh, thank you, David! I hope Sally hasn't got them! That would be real soldier's work, wouldn't it?"

David had to smile at the boy's upturned face.

"Yes," he answered, "but I hope it has been done already. There'll be plenty left for you to do, Peter."

With this, the member of Hamilton's guard took his leave of the coffee house; and Peter Morton made his way home, his heart pounding with excitement. This had been a great day in his life. He had had a sight of General Washington. And David Henry had taken him into his counsel, had confided in him, and

had entrusted him with a soldier's errand, in case that errand should have to be performed.

David forthwith spread the news of Charles Langley. By the following day, the Sons of Liberty were made aware of the identity of the young man who had been moving among them for several weeks.

"There is much Tory sentiment here in New York, in spite of the splendid welcome General Washington received to-day," Augustus Van Dam declared, as he sat with his wife and daughters, talking over the events of the day that had just passed. "Tis that that makes me anxious, good wife, despite the strides our Army is making in preparation for what may come."

This peace-loving man had long since donned a uniform, and speculation was rife in this whole household as to the trend of military matters all through the Colonies.

"While Boston has seen the most of the fighting so far," he continued, "I think New York is due for an attack before long. Look at our approach by water. And does not this town hold the key of entrance to the Hudson River, and its connections with the north country? The British can enter this great harbor when

they please. And there is Long Island, a fit landing-place for the enemy troops to go ashore and bide their time. I trust the General will not give all his thought to Boston. Much as that city's untrained army needs a polished soldier, still do our troops here need him as much."

Neltje and Ottolene listened and were very quiet. They were both tired from the excitement and the crowds and the clapping and the cheering; and what their father was saying only deepened the seriousness of their thoughts.

The great General had come among them that day. He had honored New York in a signal manner, by coming here at the outset of his journey as Commander-in-Chief. But what was all this talking and planning of training raw troops, of guarding important points of land, of New York being unprotected? What could it all mean, if not war?

The girls bade their parents good night, and went silently upstairs to bed.

"What will General Washington do? Will he train all those men to fight?" asked round-eyed Ottolene, after a while.

She had exulted in tales of such men as

Patrick Henry. But if war really came to New York, as it had to Boston, her father and David Henry and all the boys she knew would go to the fight. There would be no more peace, nor happiness, nor good times. The girl's heart was heavy with dread.

"Don't worry, dear," said Neltje. "Everything will end peacefully and well."

"But I do worry," answered the child. "The British have thousands of soldiers here in New York, and people do say that more are on the way, and that England will conquer us 'rebels' if it takes the last man in her kingdom."

The pathetic little voice broke in a sob, and in an instant Neltje's arms were around her sister.

"Ottolene! How can you be troubled about anything like that, now that General Washington has charge of our affairs?"

"He will win for us, won't he, Neltje?"

"He will," answered the older girl. And, as sleep came to the sisters, their hearts were quiet at the thought of the great guiding hand which had laid its touch upon New York that day.

#### CHAPTER VI

"Fooled by a woman, and not the first time, I warrant," scoffed a redcoat who had been frequenting Charles Langley's room.

The latter had passed the afternoon in a kind of exultation over the events of the past twenty-four hours. His social success at Sally's party, followed by the rapt attention that his two comrades of the morning had given his account of events in the Colonies, had greatly eased the sting of his failure to regain the maps, and had filled the young man with a radiant content in himself which was very pleasing to his vanity.

Now this content was being briskly dispelled by a hard-headed and irate visitor from His Majesty's troops.

"And why are you so certain I'm fooled?" he asked peevishly, throwing his hat into a chair. "This town has gone wild over the arrival of that arch-rebel from Virginia. There wasn't a soul in sight at the Lansings' when I went to the house this morning. Wait until you've

"If there wasn't a soul in sight at that house, as you say, then you should have broken down the door, and taken those papers," declared the soldier. "You're too much of a milksop, Langley. A clever deed is worth nothing till it is carried to a successful close. I am willing to admit that you gained some useful information in an original manner. But then to spoil it like this! Zounds! You'd try the patience of Job!"

"I'll get those papers back as soon as I can see Sally Lansing again," replied Charles, with a return of his old boastful manner. "Let me tell you this. She and her mother live only for pleasure. I can read them like a book. Glancing over those maps would mean a half-hour's diversion for Mistress Lansing. Perhaps she would recall by them some scene of her own vain girlhood, some flirtation or the like; and then they would be cast aside and would be gone from her mind."

"Into the waste basket, or, more likely, into the fire," commented the soldier, bitterly. "And there was information which you had safely in your hands, and which might very possibly have been of infinite value to the Royal troops. The armed forces of His Majesty are sorely tried by the cunning and impudence of these scheming Colonists. You could be of infinite assistance through your intimacy with that set of them, you know."

"I've told you I asked Sally Lansing to give those papers back to me," persisted Charles, "when she and her mother should finish amusing themselves with them. And that young lady generally does as I ask. Have you considered that it is just possible that in coming for them she had a chance of —er—seeing me?"

"Conceit is a warming and pleasing thing to all those who possess it," was all the enraged soldier could say in reply; and, highly irritated, he took himself out of the room and back to his barracks.

For the British troops in the city, this had been a bitter and anxious time. His Majesty's true servant, Governor William Tryon, had chosen this very day to appear in New York, and had arrived at almost the same hour as General Washington. Although Loyalists and Colonists alike had combined in the effort to

keep the welcome of one from interfering with the other, the reception that was given the Commander of the American troops could not escape the notice of the Governor.

George Washington's name had been on all lips this evening. The throngs in the streets could talk of nothing else but his coming and his appearance, of the dignity with which he bore himself, of the look of wisdom and benignity on his face, and of their feeling of confidence in the man. Englishmen well knew what constituted a great soldier and a leader of men, and they were sorely anxious.

Then there was the loss of those maps. The knowledge of these had gone farther than even Charles Langley had suspected. And they would have been such a delightful token of welcome for the new Governor on his arrival in the city.

As for General Washington himself, he lost no time in ordering what seemed to him to be the most suitable arrangement of the military affairs of New York.

His first act, when the ceremonies of welcome were over, was, as Master Van Dam had expected, to appoint Philip Schuyler, one of

his four Major-Generals, in command of the New York militia.

On the second, and last, day of his visit, he called upon the Provincial Congress, then in session, to "discuss the military aspects of the situation," as he expressed it to Colonel Lispenard.

For, no matter how the British troops might jeer and sneer at the "ploughboy army"; no matter how eloquently British statesmen might argue that this passion for self-government was only a fitful fever from which the Colonies were suffering, and one that would soon abate; still, the men of America were asserting their rights with loaded muskets. The Colonies were in a state of war with England.

Two months before General Washington arrived in New York, the battles of Concord and Lexington had taken place. That band of valiant New England farmers, firing from behind trees and stone walls, and putting the drilled troops of mighty England to the rout, had been instrumental in drawing together men from all the colonies. The patriots had gathered from every quarter of the land, bringing their military supplies with them, and

straining every nerve to assist Boston in her opposition to the unfair government overseas. They were determined to fight to the end.

These forces had fought together in the Battle of Bunker Hill, the news of which was now spreading throughout the country. The Continental Army was definitely formed, and New York's quota of men for its ranks was now being filled from the active citizens of the city, otherwise known as the Sons of Liberty.

Augustus Van Dam had been chosen to act as one of the guards of honor for General Washington, while the latter was in New York; and he had seen and heard all that went on in the council chamber of the Provincial Congress.

"It would have done thy soul good to hear the Representatives acclaim that great man," he told his wife, as he sat in his old seat by the fire. "And if you could have heard General Washington, himself, speak! Upon my word, it gives a man confidence to do or die! Listen, Mother and Neltje and Ottolene, to the exact words he spoke at that meeting. He said: 'Having once drawn the sword, I do not expect to sheathe it without establishing American

Liberty on its most firm and solid foundation.'
'Tis he, and he alone, who can guide us to the end we seek."

"I would he could have made New York his headquarters," said Mistress Van Dam. "He was here such a short time."

"Boston hath need of him. But, from all I hear, when he has rounded up that army in battle array, he will come and organize our troops here."

"Such days as have befallen us!" exclaimed his wife. This constant talk of war was agony to her ears.

Her husband heard the despairing note in her voice; and, as Neltje went to her mother's side and clung to her arm, he rose from his chair to fetch a paper from the mantelpiece.

"Listen to me, Mother!" he exclaimed, as he unfolded it in his hands. "Thou needest a little yeast to thy dough. Hast ever heard of Thomas Paine, a friend of Benjamin Franklin?"

"Why, yes; of course I have, Augustus. So have you girls, have you not?"

"Indeed, we have," answered both Neltje and Ottolene, glad of any excuse to divert their

mother from pondering too much upon the possibility of war in New York.

"What about him, Augustus?" asked she.

"He has written a pamphlet on Common Sense, which was distributed among the militia of all the colonies last week. I had meant to read it to you long since, but the preparations for the coming of General Washington put all such things out of my head. Listen to it now. Some one has said the pamphlet is worth a whole army corps to America."

Master Van Dam's voice waxed eloquent, as he read extracts from the slender booklet he held in his hand.

"'What are you afraid of?' his stentorian voice proclaimed. "'Our present numbers of soldiers are sufficient to repel great forces. Debts we have none. No country in the world is so happily situated or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Revolution is our inherent character, and courage hath never yet forsaken us. The present time is the true time to establish union, and that peculiar time which never happens to a nation but once—of forming itself into a Government.' Does not that

put new heart into thee, Mother?" asked Master Van Dam.

"Yes, it does, Augustus. Those are brave words. Mayhap the times of peace and happiness will come again. Mayhap they are not as far away as we think."

"And mayhap they will be happier and more peaceful than any days that have ever dawned on this fair earth," exclaimed her husband, "when this bright land belongs to us Americans—nay—is America, herself, free and independent of any power save God's and her own."

Ottolene was listening with rapt attention to her father.

"And thou canst express thy soul in gladness, good wife, that we have on our side in this conflict the finest men the Creator ever cast in human mold. Look at my friend, Philip Schuyler, at the head of the New York troops,—as fine a man as ever breathed. Then there is Nathaniel Greene from Rhode Island, the second in command under General Washington, and, I am told, second only to him in skill and wisdom. And, Mother and daughters, what think ye?"

"What—what is it?" came breathlessly from all three.

"I had meant to tell you this before, too; but my mind has been too full of other things to come near it. One of the generals saw Alexander Hamilton drilling on Bowling Green this morning, and—so the story goes—stood and watched him with great approbation; and, before he left, he introduced our young Captain to General Washington, who, it is said, was vastly pleased with his military skill and his keen brains, as well as with his winning manners."

"Oh-h!" cried the girls, their eyes sparkling and dancing in the way their father loved to see. "And did he see David, too, do you suppose?"

"That I cannot tell. David will let us know more about it when we see him. Captain Hamilton's band is now counted among the best and bravest in the Colonies. I have also heard that it is to be made an artillery unit. But more of this again, when we see and talk to David."

"Oh, I do wonder if he went with Captain Hamilton to see the great General," exclaimed Neltje. But they were all obliged to wonder

and wait in vain, for no sign of the young man did the family have that night.

Indeed, his hours at home were now fewer than Augustus Van Dam's had become. Alexander Hamilton exacted long and arduous practice from his men; and when the duties of a soldier were not demanding his attention, David was in close company with his commanding officer, or with other active men of the group.

These men talked among themselves about the very topics upon which Master Van Dam had spoken so earnestly, that night following George Washington's departure from New York. The unprotected state of the island, surrounded by great waterways on two sides, and with the waves of the ocean lapping its southern boundary, had long been the subject of anxious thought among these Sons of Liberty.

Every one of them, by this time, knew of the making of the maps, and of Charles Langley's treachery; and word had gone out among them all that he should be henceforth regarded as an outcast and an enemy. The thought of those papers which the strange fellow had carried

away with him from Sally's party, and of the crafty way in which he had caused the young people to make the maps, had tortured David Henry's thoughts ever since he had discovered what had happened. Even during the exciting visit of General Washington, the knowledge of what had taken place and of how he had been outwitted had rankled in David's heart.

At his first opportunity, David hurried again to Sally Lansing's home. It was so late at night that he feared he might find everything in darkness; but, strangely enough, the house was brilliantly lighted. As David went up the path that lead from the street to the front door, a man came hurriedly out of the house. In spite of the mild weather, this man wore an overcoat, the collar of which was turned up, perhaps to hide the sight of his face.

But there was no mistaking the peculiarity in Charles Langley's walk, and David knew at once who Sally's late visitor had been.

"Halt!" commanded David.

But Charles had caught sight of the tall soldier the instant he had left the house, and he was prepared for this sudden reception. With a quick, twisting movement, he stepped into the

shrubbery beside the path, and disappeared in the darkness.

"Halt before I fire!" commanded David again. He was starting in pursuit of his man, when the light from the open door was suddenly obscured. David looked around and saw the Lansings' old colored manservant, standing on the threshold with a gun in his hand.

"Don't shoot, Abel," he said quietly. At the sound of the well-known voice, the old darky drew back with a sigh of relief.

"Praise de Lord you hab come, Marse David," he exclaimed.

"What is the meaning of that, Abel?" asked the young soldier sharply, pointing to the musket which was still clasped in the faithful brown hands. "And who was that man who just left this house?"

"Dat man am Marse Charles Langley," answered Abel, with infinite scorn.

"And what was he doing here at this hour of the night, that you had to follow him out of the house with a musket pointing at his miserable back? Speak up, Abel! There is no time to be lost!"

"Marse Charles Langley," continued Abel,

"he ben talkin' ter Miss Sally lak no gen'leman should. An' when she tol' him ter go, an he still kep on talkin', I tuk dis yere gun o' Marse Lansing's—an' he went."

"Good for you, Abel," exclaimed David, his face breaking into a smile for just an instant. "Now go and tell Miss Sally I would like to see her for a minute."

Sally Lansing needed no messenger to bring her to the spot, for she had been standing in the drawing-room with burning cheeks, ever since Charles Langley had been driven forth by the irate Abel.

"The maps, Sally, the maps!" exclaimed David. They were his only thought, for the time.

"Oh, David! They have been destroyed. They were burned to ashes early yesterday morning. There is nothing to worry about on that score. But what a time I have had!" The girl was as pale as a ghost. David led her back into the room and sat down beside her, looking at her with anxious eyes.

"Sally, tell me all that has happened since I saw you. But first of all, did that villain come to get the maps back from you?"

"He did, David. He tried to get them back on the plea that the English soldiers—two or three of them who were in his apartment and are his special friends—have such long hours off duty that they would enjoy studying them, and that in so doing they would learn a great deal about the new world. At first, I thought I would hold the truth from him, and pretend to take the matter lightly—perhaps let him think I had mislaid them. But I told no lie, David."

"I am sure you did not, my dear. But on with your story, please, Sally."

"Well, when Charles grew more and more persistent, I told him I had burned them, because there was information in them that might be dangerous to our men if the British gained possession of it. Then, David, he began to rail in a manner which I had not thought possible of Charles Langley."

"What were some of the things he said to you, Sally?"

"He said that I was born of an English father, for one thing; that I had turned traitor to the land he loved; that were I of true blood I would tell him all he wanted to know about the Sons of Liberty. I could not find a word to

answer, he talked so fast and so long. And then, at last, Abel came in, and drove him out in a fine wrath."

"Scoundrel!" ejaculated David.

"He is not true to the American Cause," declared Sally, the hot color coming into her cheeks again. "He is not on the side of the Colonies."

"I know it!" exclaimed David, gritting his teeth. "And there are plenty more like him. Our city is besieged with them. How did you get the papers back, Sally?"

The troubled expression on the young man's face vanished in smiles, as he listened to Sally's story of her visit to Charles Langley's room. As she ended with the account of burning the papers in her mother's fireplace, he grasped her hands in his.

"Sally! Sally Lansing! You Daughter of Liberty! You deserve to wear a dress of buff and blue."

"Oh, no, David! But let us stop talking of this miserable business, and tell me what General Washington said to you and Captain Hamilton. I am so anxious to know! Please tell me, David. I hear he was greatly pleased

with Alexander, and with a tall member of that young gentleman's band."

"Another time, Sally. Another time I will tell you every word he spoke, for they shall be burned in my memory forever. But I must not keep you up any longer, and besides, I must be on my way."

Bidding Sally good night, David hurried directly to Charles Langley's lodging-house. Late as it was, he knocked at the door until he had roused Mrs. deVeaux and Julie out of their beds. But they told him that Mr. Langley had paid his board in full, and had given up his room, and that they had not the faintest idea where he could be found.

"If only his memory fails him when it comes to the information he gained from those maps," breathed David to himself. "He is not over familiar with the city itself, although he seems to know something of political affairs. At any rate, the redcoats didn't have much time to examine the maps."

With scant comfort from his evening's work, David made his way back to the barracks to reveal these latest developments to Alexander Hamilton.

"One must learn to look twice, and then twice over again, at one's best friends these days."

This piece of wisdom was set forth by Clarissa Morton, a few days after all these stirring events had taken place, as she and Sally and Neltje sat together in the big sunny drawing-room of Sally's home.

Mrs. Lansing had sent messages to Neltje and Clarissa the day before, inviting them to come in the morning and to spend the day. "And be as bright and merry as ever you can," she had written at the end of her notes, "for Sally is sore downcast over some events which have taken place."

David had not told the girls the tale of the maps, but they had not been in the Lansing house half an hour, before they had heard the whole story from Sally.

"It isn't that I mind so much losing Charles Langley from our set, now that I know he is a traitor to the Cause of Liberty," she concluded, holding her head high, while the other two girls listened intently. "But it's the sudden shattering of my respect for him that makes it hard. Isn't it strange that the things you can't see or touch are the things that you care most about?

Just think, girls. Tea is not wrong in itself. Stamped paper was not wrong in itself. 'Tis only the thought of the oppressive will that tried to exact money from us by means of taxing those things that troubled us."

"I verily believe that Mr. Jay and the Livingstons would put you girls in the Provincial Congress—nay, in the Continental Congress itself—if they could hear your learned reasoning," laughed Mrs. Lansing delightedly. She had been sitting near her daughter, listening with the greatest interest to all that had been said. "But come now, girls; lay aside your knitting and your too serious talk for a while. Here comes Abel with the goodies."

Joyful at seeing his beloved young mistress smiling once more, Abel had outdone himself in heaping cakes and sweetmeats on the great silver tray, which he now carried into the drawing-room with great pomp and ceremony.

In the midst of the gaiety that ensued, David Henry appeared for a call, accompanied by another soldier. Leaving his companion in the hall for a moment, he went in to speak to the gay group.

"Sally, Neltje, Clarissa!" he exclaimed, after making a low bow over Mrs. Lansing's outstretched hand. "I have a surprise for you. When will you be ready to receive it?"

"Now!" chorused the girls with excitement.

David disappeared into the hall, and presently returned with no less a person than Captain Nathan Hale, of South Coventry, Connecticut.

After the first greetings, what a chattering and questioning began! There were questions about all the people the three girls had met during that happy visit, several years ago, at the Hale home. There was chattering about things which they had not thought of since they left New England, but which were now recalled to them with greater force than ever.

"The winters are so cold up there, Mother," explained Sally, "that the stable and the horses are all under the same roof with the house."

"What a cozy and comfortable place it must be," commented Mrs. Lansing, with great politeness. Inwardly, she shivered at the thought of the northern climate and of the methods resorted to for the maintenance of warmth for man and beast.

"I can think of no finer spot on earth than a New England farmstead," agreed the young schoolmaster fervently.

Then, urged by the little group around him, he told them of his studies, and of the pupils in his school; of his brother, who had gone into the ministry of the church; of his family and his home. But he talked also of the Cause of the Colonies; of the passionate desire for self-government, for which the Colonists were ready to die; and of the Commander of the Army, who had summoned him to New York to do a special task for him.

"God has sent General Washington to us in our hour of need," Nathan Hale declared. "Such wisdom and goodness and perseverance in one man is almost unbelievable."

The two men tarried as long as they were able, and then took their leave, while Neltje and Clarissa remained at the Lansing home for the night. It was not pleasant, in these days, for a woman to be out after dark without an escort.

Indeed, New York was now very different in appearances and habits from what it had been twenty years before, when Augustus Van Dam and his wife were married in Saint Mark's

Church in the Bowerie Lane. The patriots had done everything in their power to guard against a sudden attack from the enemy troops. But their thorough work had marred the beauty and destroyed the peace of the town. Every cross-street was barricaded in some fashion. A high stone barrier reached across Broadway at the Bowling Green. There was a redoubt over the Hudson River, west of Trinity Church, and a larger one at Grand and Centre Streets, which the New Yorkers had proudly named "Bunker Hill." A fort had been built farther up the North River, and another over on Brooklyn Heights; and besides these, the untiring troops had dug ditches and thrown up earthworks at almost every corner.

Where no other means of defense by blockade could be formed, trees had been cut down and thrown across the streets and paths of the city. The old pear tree in Augustus Van Dam's garden, together with a tall elm, both of which had been his pride, had disappeared from the green and flowery spot where they had stood so many years. With his own hands Master Van Dam had felled the trees; but if the blows of the axe smote his heart as they did

the trunks of the trees, there was no sign of it on his face as he toiled.

And now, the latest news from the enemy was that Governor Tryon was attempting to persuade all the gunsmiths in New York to emigrate to England!

"The British would undermine General Washington and his Army, as one would pull a ladder from under a man," stormed young Peter Morton. "Take our gunsmiths to England to fashion weapons to turn against free men!"

The ire of the Colonists knew no bounds. They were inhaling the first breaths of a new freedom. Fetters of any kind, just or unjust, were intolerable.

The pamphlet which Master Van Dam had read with such gusto to his wife, to cheer her drooping spirits, very soon came to be the creed of all New York; and most men searched in vain for words to express their feelings towards the King and Parliament of England.

Alexander Hamilton, with his pen seemingly dipped in flame, was blazing public opinion to lofty heights, in his articles in the newspapers. The Tories undertook to answer in the same

daily columns; and a war of words ensued, during those days when New York stood on the brink of the great struggle.

Finally, a letter was set forth in no uncertain terms and was published in the city. It was posted in the names of the King of England and the Royal Governor of New York, and contained what they most devoutly believed to be the rights of the English Government.

The night following this posting, David Henry sat in Jasper Drake's Tavern with a group of soldiers. This hospitable spot had seen many gatherings since the days of the Stamp Act Riots. The young men looked forward to the arrival of other comrades before the evening was over. There were men of affairs and men of action who would doubtless join them, knowing that they would learn about those current events of which they had not already been informed.

Very early in the evening there came the sound of shuffling feet and the cries of exultant Sons of Liberty. James Morton, the Paulding boys, Herbert Van Wyck, and a host of others, headed by Captain Lamb, came into the tavern with shouts of triumph.

"We have them all!" cried Lamb, bringing down his fist on the bare wooden table, around which the soldiers were sitting.

"All what?" exclaimed David Henry.

"The copies of the messages of the Tories, and nothing else! We have the first one that came out, and the printers' copies, too,—all of them! We went to the London Press and took them! And not one moment longer shall they see the light of day!"

Captain Lamb carried the big roll of printing to the fireplace. A great shout went up from the crowd of men, as the flames licked around the papers, and the words of the Tories were reduced to ashes.

"Now for our answer!" shouted Lamb, as he laid a fresh sheet of foolscap on the table and began to write.

When he had finished he turned to David, and held out the freshly written sheet.

"Will you read it to the assembled company, sir?" he said.

"With the greatest of pleasure," answered David eagerly. He had been keenly curious to know what this was all about.

Scanning the words hastily, he read aloud:

"'Sir, if you suffer to be printed in your press anything against the rights and liberties of America, or in favour of our inveterate foes, the King, Ministry, and Parliament of Great Britain, then death and destruction, ruin and perdition, shall be your portion.

"Signed by order of the Committee of

Tarring and Feathering.

"'LÉGION.'"

David could hardly conceal a smile as he read.

To be sure, this paper was not in the manner of General Washington or Nathaniel Greene or Mr. John Jay, in their dealings with the enemy; but these men standing before him, these Sons of Liberty, struggling for the right, as it had been given them to see the right, were as true patriots as might be found in America.

"Where is this to be taken?" he asked, although he could well imagine what the destination of the paper would be.

"To the owner of the London Press," came the reply. "Perhaps that will teach him how best to roast his goose." And once again the uproarious crowd surged into the street, bearing with them their ultimatum to the King's printer.

#### CHAPTER VII

General Washington, bending all his efforts towards organizing the troops that were to constitute the Army of Boston, was, at the same time, keenly watching all that was going on in the other colonies.

He had heard of the preparations of Sir Henry Clinton to leave Boston and move upon New York. None knew better than Washington what a balance-wheel of the Nation this once peaceful little Dutch trading town had now become. And New York had not soldiers enough of her own to protect her from an attack.

He had urged Congress to make the city secure with troops from New Jersey, but this had not been done. So the Commander-in-Chief took matters into his own hands. Yielding to the fervent plea of General Charles Lee, that he be allowed the honor of defending New York against the British, General Washington

despatched him with all haste from Boston.

General Lee started in high spirits. As he passed through Connecticut, he gathered two additional regiments of men to augment the New York force. On the very borders of New York however, he was stopped by a messenger from the city.

The conservative and deliberate Committee of Safety in New York had sent letters to him posthaste to warn him that there were British ships in the harbor, and that there were strong forces of British troops in the town, together with a burning Tory sympathy among many of the inhabitants. A sudden action now, the letters argued, unless carefully planned, might result in the loss of the city.

New York, meanwhile, was gradually coming to the end of her patience. General Lee chafed at the enforced delay in Connecticut. The Committee wrote to him again, at greater length than before, stating that they had sent for more powder to be on hand and within reach, and that they now had entrenching tools, six brass field pieces, and provisions for five thousand men for at least a month. Captain Alexander Hamilton was turning his company

into one of artillery, and the Committee were making carriages for their other guns.

With all this to assist in his defense, General Lee could see that he would be more successful if he waited, than if he marched down with his volunteer troops from New England, especially as his men had been in training only six short weeks.

But the wily English General had other plans. He did not propose to attack New York just at present. Although he and his fleet, and his brother, the Admiral, appeared in the harbor on that very Sunday early in February on which General Lee, led to believe that preparations for him were now complete, marched into the town from Westchester, there was no clash of arms.

After a call from Governor Tryon on board his ship, the Englishman sailed away to South Carolina.

"They say," declared Alexander Hamilton to David Henry on the evening of that same day, "that General Howe explained that he was disappointed not to land in the city, for he came only on a friendly visit."

David grimaced in answer to this news. No

one knew what to make of it all; but General Lee lost no time in putting up more fortifications in the city.

And what a town was New York to protect! "What am I to do?" he asked, almost in despair. "How am I to defend completely a place surrounded on three sides by deep water, against an enemy who controls the sea?"

The first thing to be done was to build defenses which would, at least, hamper the landing of troops from the British ships. The Hell Gate passage was forthwith blocked by a fort on Hoorn's Hook. Batteries were placed at the foot of Catherine Street and at Coenties Slip. It was thought that these, with the aid of Fort George and the batteries on Long Island, would prevent a long sojourn of any British fleet in the harbor.

All the streets which led to the North River were barricaded, while smaller fortifications, as far as Kingsbridge, would block any advance from that quarter. As these fortifications increased, so did the number of soldiers multiply.

"Our Army in New York now counts four thousand men," Master Van Dam declared proudly to his wife and daughters.

Leaders came and went. The Continental Congress sent General Lee to command the Army of the Carolinas; and General Sterling, a New Yorker by birth, took over the defense of the city.

The Committee of Safety ordered the whole male population of the city out, to work on the fortifications. Major General Putnam was sent to take command. The American Army, lacking only five of its regiments, marched to New York; and, on the thirteenth of April, General Washington arrived and took up his quarters at the seat of war, which was now on this island by the sea.

"One knows not what a day will bring forth," said Mistress Van Dam to Ottolene and Neltje, as the three sat together in the dining-room. Their plates lay before them, bearing Drusilla's good food, but the three ate but little.

"Indeed, we may not know, Mother," said Neltje. "But often they are great and wonderful things that happen,—not always things of dread and horror."

"Thou hast talked so much to David and Captain Hamilton, my dear, that thou lookest at things with their eyes," came the reply.

"Oh, I should not say that, Mother," answered the girl, flushing, "although they have both taught me many things. It is the thoughts of the things that our Colonies are striving for that makes my heart beat so with joy. I forget all about the strife itself when I think what is going to be ours when we have finally won the fight."

"Mother, thou lovest Father and Ottolene and me?"

"Better than life; thou knowest that, Neltje."

"Well," and here the girl went around to her mother's side, and knelt down on the floor as she used to do when she was a child, "Well, Mother, suppose half of us—half of each of us three—belonged to Governor Tryon?"

"Child! What non --"

"Please, Mother, hear me out," begged Neltje, laying a soft finger on her mother's lips. "—belonged to Governor Tryon, and whatsoever you wanted me to do, for instance, must be submitted to him first. And whatsoever you wanted Ottolene to learn, he must first say whether or not he thought it for her good. And whatever Father—"

"Peace, peace child!" exclaimed Neltje's mother, leaning down to kiss her daughter. "I see thy reason clear. Thou need go no farther. What we love and what is our own, we must have freedom to enjoy to the full. God grant that we gain it. And God grant that that gaining be swift, and that this trouble soon come to its end, with its forts and swords and cannon and musketry. God grant that all good Englishmen come to their senses and see that in the demands of the Colonists we ask only what they themselves would desire, were they subject to the same conditions."

Although Mistress Van Dam did not know it, her prayer had already been partially answered. At the very moment when she and her daughters were at their late breakfast, the Provincial Congress of New York, then sitting at White Plains, was listening with reverence to the words that were being read to it, — words that proclaimed New York's liberty.

"'On April 20, 1775, the day after the Battle of Lexington in Massachusetts, New York did then become a State. We demand, therefore, that officers of justice carry on business in the

name of this State, since King and Parliament are no longer recognized."

There was breathless stillness for a moment, after the reading of this minute had taken place. Then a ringing voice smote the air:

"'When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation.

'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and

organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . . "

The throng stood at attention until the Declaration of Independence had been read from beginning to end.

When it was finished, David, who had been sent to the meeting by Alexander Hamilton, hurried from the room. He hastily mounted his horse and returned with all speed to the city.

Captain Hamilton, who was becoming as important in affairs of State as in military matters, had sent him to that meeting of the Assembly so that he might gain an accurate account of what took place at the proclamation of New York's Statehood and Independence.

But the young soldier's place was now on the parade-ground down-town, with the Company of Artillery to which he belonged, together with the other New York troops, drawn up according to orders from the Commander-in-Chief, to hear the great Declaration read. David spurred his horse, for he must be at his post to hear those momentous words read again.

At last, he stood at attention with the rest of Hamilton's men, and listened:

"'We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United colonies are, and of good right ought to be, free and independent States."

Drawn up on the parade-ground was that throng of men which formed the army brought to New York by command of General Washington.

What a motley array it was! There were troops from Connecticut, wearing the old red coats which had doubtless been used in the French wars. There were men from Maryland, looking like a band of Robin Hood's followers, in their green hunting shirts and leggins. The soldiers from Delaware were attired in dark blue coats with red facings. New York's neighbors from the Jersey shore wore short red coats and striped trousers, or short blue coats and old leather breeches. The Pennsylvanians were resplendent in many colors. There were some with brown coats,

faced with buff; some with blue coats, faced with red; and some wore brown waistcoats, on which shone home-made pewter buttons.

The voice went on:

"'And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.'"

When the reading of the Declaration was finished, shouts and cheers went up from the crowds that thronged the outside of the paradeground. The soldiers dispersed, some turning again to the bulwarks of the city, and asking themselves: "Now what will come?"

But David Henry stood in the midst of the uproar, dreaming once more. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," echoed in his thoughts. Did ever a people aim for higher ends than these of the American Colonies? They desired a land of their own; a land of brave men and women and happy homes, where society might develop itself freely; a land of men and women, whose minds and muscles would grow strong with toiling for their own bread, and with solving their own problems; a land of study and understanding; a land of

peace;—for when this great prize of liberty was won, war must never come again. Every human being must have life in all its fullness. Liberty this land should have, even though by the sword. And when that sword should be sheathed for all time, the United States would continue along the path of Progress, always in pursuit of happiness.

These last words held David with a charm. Just what had that eagle-eyed Mr. Jefferson meant by them when he penned them? The question drove David to thought, while answers came crowding into his mind.

"Forward — March!"

It was the voice of Captain Alexander Hamilton. For the present, there were other things to be done besides speculating over the meanings of words. The finely drilled company marched to its barracks, to disperse in the fashion that became soldiers of their sort.

The instant this ceremony was over, Hamilton turned quickly to David for an account of the meeting of the Congress at White Plains.

"The ship of State of New York is launched at last!" he exclaimed. "May we be given the wisdom to pilot it aright."

The hearts of the patriots overflowed with joy that day; but in all the city there was no happier group than that which sat on the Van Dams' back piazza that evening. The dismantled garden, bare of its familiar trees, was flooded with midsummer moonlight. There was no regretful thought of yesterday, nor dread of what might happen on the morrow, as the family talked of the great events that had taken place.

"Now this land is our own, is it not, David?" asked Ottolene.

She was sitting beside her father, holding a bunch of roses, picked from the climbing bush which still hung bravely to one corner of the piazza and filled the warm air with its fragrance.

"We are the United States now," she continued, her sweet young voice still childish in its enthusiasm. "And we can do as we please. Is not that so?"

"We are certainly the United States," answered David. "Our Colonies have declared themselves free and independent. But men and women of flesh and blood need more than words, let me tell you, Ottolene. We must prove these facts to the English nation, before

"And that only by fighting, I suppose, as they have fought in Boston. I wish those British in their red coats would go back to their own land, where they belong, and leave us here in our country to enjoy our happiness."

"I think we can persuade them to go," said David, with a glitter in his eye. "But listen! What is happening now?"

In an instant he was gone; and around the house, and out upon Broadway, the four Van Dams followed him. Another crowd had formed from the far corners of the city and was now swarming forward, carrying flaming torches. Their aim was soon apparent. Down Broadway they surged, to the Battery.

"Tear it down! We will have none of him!
Our land is done with kings!"

These words and many stronger ones rent the air; they grew louder and more boisterous, until, finally, the crowd reached the Bowling Green. Then the frenzy broke loose.

For several years there had stood in the center of the Green a leaden statue of King George III of England. Its metal was gilded,

and the whole had made an imposing figure as the smooth surface caught the gleam of New York's sunlight.

Now the heavy object was wrenched from its pedestal. Some of the tallest men in the crowd—great stalwart fellows—tore away the foundations, leaving a background unbroken by the portly outline of His British Majesty.

The crowd then turned northward and surged up Broadway, bearing the symbol of tyranny with them.

"Down with painted kings!" they shouted.

"And may we cherish the unvarnished metal of true men in our land," breathed Augustus Van Dam fervently.

"What dost thou really think of what the crowd has done, Father?" asked Neltje. Her eyes were dancing, but she wanted to know what a wise man would say to such vandalism.

"The mob have done in deed what men of more tempered mind have oft done in spirit. Neltje, thou must not be taken too much aback—thou and Mother and Ottolene—when real violence comes."

The girl held her father's arm tightly. She

was a woman now; and none knew better than she how closely and loosely the sword was hanging over New York's head.

The months passed, and another summer dawned. Notwithstanding General Washington's superhuman efforts to drill and form an army with which to hold the city and her open harbor against the great English adversary; notwithstanding the heavy blockades, which had been reared at every important turn of the town; the British transports were now gathering in the lower bay, carrying such an army of men as had never been seen in America. There were thirty thousand of them, armed and equipped; and, as it was impossible to place any obstacles in the way of such a force, they landed on Staten Island during the latter part of June.

"They do say General Howe is loth to make an attack," said Alexander Hamilton. "I hear he has been authorized to offer pardon for submission, and is waiting hopefully to receive it."

"No doubt we all need pardon from Heaven for our sins and transgressions," burst out Augustus Van Dam. "But the American

who needs the pardon of his Britannic Majesty is yet to be found, at least in my search among my countrymen."

Alexander Hamilton's radiant smile appeared. This was one of his rare visits to the home where he had been a frequent visitor during his early days in New York. A soldier's life was filled with both thought and action these days; and General Washington had a great fondness for this brilliant young fellow, whom he had now made his private secretary.

The American army was now centered in New York. General Washington had divided his forces, holding the larger part in New York, to protect the city, and stationing the smaller part in Brooklyn.

The long hot summer days ran their blazing course. When would the sword fall? The once contented little town by the sea was wrapped in a seething expectation of battle.

One day in August, General Howe put twenty thousand men ashore at Gravesend Bay. Long before daylight of the following morning, the seasoned troops set forth; and the solid flanks of England's long-trained men filled the dusty lanes of Long Island. Tramp, tramp, tramp;—the redcoats marched mercilessly on, creating havoc among the little groups of Continentals scattered here and there.

The American sentries, stationed along the island, were overcome; the troops of the Colonists were driven into Brooklyn; and there, on the Heights, the British inflicted huge losses upon these turbulent Americans.

When General Washington reached the fort, he found his army defeated. Four hundred of his men lay dead or wounded. One thousand had been taken prisoners. The darkness had fallen.

"I don't think war—is—any kind—of a
—way—to—settle—what— you—want!"
sobbed Ottolene in a passion of tears. "I—
think—it is—too—wicked. I think—it's
murder!"

The sword had done its work at last, and it had not spared the little group she loved so well. For Peter Morton had been killed in the Battle of Brooklyn Heights.

"He died like a man," said David Henry, who never again made mention of the name of his brave little comrade.

It was evident that General Howe, with his transports and his troops and his ships, was able to lay siege to New York in a very thorough manner. It was also evident that he intended to do so. How easy it would then be to subdue these Americans!

"We will starve them out," he declared.

"And when New York is ours,—the gateway of America—why, the struggle is won!"

But a thoughtful and powerful Commanderin-Chief withdrew his troops from the heights of Brooklyn that night under cover of the darkness. When the morning of August thirtieth dawned, General Howe saw what had happened. While a small guard of Americans had kept up a steady fire, to cover any sound which might be made by the moving army, General Washington had guided ten thousand men across the river, with all their arms and He well knew that had he waited anstores. other twenty-four hours, the mighty fleet from England would have been in the river, laying siege to New York and cutting the Continental Army in two. Now the remainder of his army was safe.

"Oh, but he is a wise man - our General!"

said Hamilton to David Henry. "In that last message of his to Congress, he said, in substance, that on our side the war must be largely defensive. He means to hold his own against every British attack, rather than to rush madly ahead. See what he did on that one night. His patience and persistence are almost superhuman."

"Do you think the enemy plans to winter here?"

"It looks very much like it. But I should like to know just what Howe is planning to do."

"That seems to be a matter that is beyond our ken."

"I am not so sure that it is. The General has thought of ways of finding out, and I would trust him to do so."

The beautiful month of September arrived with its cool winds and brilliant sunshine, in a New York it had never known before. The long hot summer, with its terrible and increasing strain of anxiety, had made itself felt on all the Americans. The Mortons went about their several duties steadily and quietly, saying little. Father and the twins were in the army, and Clarissa kept close by her mother's side all

day long. Sally's strange and trying experience with Charles Langley seemed to have piled years upon her shining brown head. She also remained at home with her mother during the greater part of the day. No one had much heart for merrymaking now; and besides, the young men were all on duty. Neltje's bright color was gone; even placid Ottolene, now quite a tall girl, looked pale and serious.

"I think it would do both of you girls a world of good to have a breath of real country air," exclaimed Mistress Van Dam one evening. "What say you, Neltje and Ottolene, to going up to Mistress Murray's, to spend the day tomorrow? You know how she ever urges you to come."

"I'd love it, Mother," exclaimed Neltje.
"And you will come, too?"

Mistress Van Dam shook her head.

"What say you, Ottolene?" asked she.

"Oh, I would like it, too. But, Mother, why will you not go?"

"Because I do not want to be so far from the house, in case thy father should come in to snatch a moment in his home, and have a word with his family. I will attend Divine Service

to-morrow, and then remain here, while Drusilla attends you two girls up to the farm-house. All I ask of the three of you is that you keep close together on the way, and be back here before darkness falls."

The girls went upstairs to pick out the dresses they were to wear on the morrow; and very soon after this, the whole house was in darkness.

"I wonder if the flowers will be in blossom," exclaimed Ottolene the next morning, as they made themselves ready. It seemed like the old happy times, to be going up to Mrs. Murray's for a day on the farm.

Mistress Van Dam watched her daughters start, with the faithful Drusilla to bear them company on their walk; and then she went up to her room to array herself for church.

She was a little late in starting, and the streets were almost deserted as she made her way to Saint Mark's on the Bowerie Lane. When she reached the wide portico of the church, she stood for a moment between the pillars, and looked out over the river.

What changes had come to New York since she had walked out of that door with her

Augustus, so many years ago! The very evening before their wedding the two had walked down the leafy Maiden Lane, with the sea air blowing in their faces. Some birds with bright red breasts were singing in the trees, and the soft air of spring was in their throats.

She could remember farther back than that, when the canal ran across the lower part of the island; and she could recall how she used to like to scamper along the beaten path at its side. Now that canal was closed, and a street had replaced it. Maiden Lane was now a street, too; and Broadway, with its handsome Trinity Church and its Saint Paul's, was a beautiful avenue, one of which any town might be proud. New York could be one of the greatest cities in the world, if only this disagreement with England could be settled once and forever.

The sound of singing voices reminded Mistress Van Dam that she had come to attend the service. As she entered the church she paused to listen to the hymn that was being sung.

"' Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning Providence He hides a smiling face. 'His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour; The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flower.

'Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.'"

The hymn was evidently a new one to minister and people, for instead of being in the psalmbook that was generally used at the services, it was printed on broadcast sheets, which had been distributed among the pews.

As Mistress Van Dam's eyes reached the end of the verses, she saw the author's name.

"Tis written by that good English poet, William Cowper," she told herself in surprise. "English words, penned by an English hand, and yet do they form the best song we Americans can sing to-day in the face of our trouble."

The service was a long one; but its peace and quiet was a boon to the listeners, almost all of whom were women. To be sure, during the taking of the collection and the closing prayers, there had come the sound of distant guns, from the direction of the East River; but this was

not an unusual accompaniment to all that New York thought or did in these days, and little attention was paid to it by the worshippers.

The dominie, however, who had been keeping an eye upon certain happenings which were taking place outside the open windows of Saint Mark's, knew that something long expected was about to take place. He knew that the blow was about to fall upon New York. The instant the last prayer was ended, he threw out his hands.

"And now to your homes, good people! And God save us all. The British are coming!"

The women clung together, hurrying out to look across the river. In the distance, at Kip's Bay, they could see that the stream was black with boats, carrying the army of redcoats across from Long Island to New York. There were thousands of British soldiers there. General Howe was about to capture the city.

"God save us all," the poor women cried, as they hurried to their homes.

"And guard Augustus and my children, all three in the path of the enemy," breathed Mistress Van Dam, as she closed the door of her home.

There was nothing for her to do but to resign herself. Already there was heavy firing in the city. The Americans were resisting the landing with vigor. But, after all, what could untrained soldiers, like the Colonists, do against these solid flanks of England's seasoned troops?

Mistress Van Dam sat down in the armchair by the fireplace, and clasped her hands.

#### CHAPTER VIII

General Washington well knew that the motley array of soldiers who were his army, and who had listened so eagerly to the declaration of the independence of the United States, were possessed of a purpose for the achievement of which they would struggle until the very end. He also knew, better than anyone, how scantily equipped they were to carry out the great mission entrusted to them.

It was out of the reach of human possibility for him to hold New York against the onslaughts of the British, who had stretched their lines along the shores of Long Island, and were bringing up frigates and transports to be in readiness for the crossing of the river.

So the Commander-in-Chief had held a series of conferences with his officers, to persuade them that a plan of retreat was the wisest move possible, for the present. A majority of the hotheaded patriots only half agreed to this, and the

General was obliged to make a compromise. He would keep five thousand American soldiers in the city, to resist Howe and his army when they should try to take possession of New York. The rest of the troops should withdraw to the Harlem lines at Kingsbridge, to act as reserve when the fight should come.

Many of Washington's men were sick and disabled at this time; the winter was approaching; supplies were beginning to give out. He looked back over what had been done, and wrote the unvarnished truth to Congress.

"To be prepared at each point of attack has occasioned an expense of labor which now seems useless and is regretted by those who form a judgement from after knowledge; but men of discernment will see that by such works and preparations we have delayed the operations of the campaign till it is too late to effect any capital incursion into the country. measure is to be formed with some apprehension that all our troops will not do their duty. On our side the war should be defensive; it has been called a war of posts; we should on all occasions avoid a general action, and never be drawn into a necessity to put anything to risk. Persuaded that it would be presumptuous to draw out our young troops into open ground against their superiors both in number and dis-

cipline, I have never spared the spade and pickaxe. I have not found that readiness to defend even strong posts at all hazards which are necessary to derive the greatest benefit from them. We are now in a post acknowledged by every man of judgement to be untenable. A retreating army is encircled with difficulties; declining an engagement subjects a general to reproach, and may throw discouragement over the minds of many; but when the fate of America may be at stake on the issue, we should protract the war if possible. The enemy mean to winter in New York; that they can drive us out is equally clear; nothing seems to remain but to determine the time of their taking possession."

General Washington's young secretary, Alexander Hamilton, saw to the sealing and sending of this message, marveling, as he did so, at the coolness and wisdom of the man who had written it.

"There are no mists in his thought, nor clouds before his eyes," the brilliant young fellow told himself. "He sees things as they are, not as they might or should be, not as he would like others to think they are. Integrity of thought and purpose, and indomitable will to accomplish this purpose—I wonder if they are

But the mind of General Washington's private secretary was not given to vague musings any more often that was that of his revered commander. Both men were waiting with intense eagerness to hear the result of a certain conference which had been scheduled to take place on Staten Island.

As had been hinted before, General Howe had undertaken a mission to the Continental Congress on behalf of peace. The English message arrived just before the one from General Washington; and the august body at once set to work to decide upon what courses they should take in handling these two important matters.

First they considered the letter from the Commander. Of course, the city of New York should not be captured by the British. They would order more troops to the aid of Washington at once. They sent hurried word to Rhode Island, North Carolina, and Virginia, to despatch their troops to New York; they also urged the provincial conventions and assemblies of other States to hurry what aid they

could to the sorely beset town. Having thus complied with the American Commander's request, as far as they were able, Congress then turned to the message from the enemy.

A sharp debate followed the first mention of this negotiation for peace. The greater number of the delegates were against any kind of conference between the patriots and the representatives of British oppression. Finally, however, the suggestion was wisely made that such a conference would help to delay action on the part of the enemy surrounding New York. A vote was taken, and the ballot showed that Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge had been elected to meet General Howe, and to hear what he had to say.

"A large collation had been prepared at the Billops House," Hamilton related to Washington, after this meeting had taken place, "where Howe makes his headquarters at Tottenville. The General declared to our men that it was not in his power to grant the independence which America demanded; but he could and would say that he regretted extremely the precipitancy they had shown in many matters. It was painful to England, he said, and

perilous to ourselves. Whereat, it is said," continued Hamilton, his lean face aglow, "that Mr. Franklin replied in his dry manner: 'The people of America will endeavor to take care of themselves and alleviate as much as possible the pain your Lordship might suffer in consequence of any severe measures you might feel it your duty to adopt.'

"Finding that his efforts towards peaceful negotiations were unavailing, the General escorted his visitors to their boat, politely informing them of his regret that he was unable to regard the three of them as public characters. To this, Mr. Adams replied: 'Your Lordship may consider us in any light you please; and indeed, I should be willing to conduct myself in any character which would be agreeable to your Lordship, except that of a British subject.'"

Alexander Hamilton could hardly contain his hilarity as he told the results of the conference. But General Washington could only smile grimly. The enemy meant to spend the winter in New York, and nothing remained now but to await the time when they would decide to take possession.

Neltje and Ottolene, walking much too fast for the aging Drusilla, had enjoyed every moment of their journey up to Mrs. Murray's farm that Sunday morning. When they reached the house, that lady was awaiting them, as usual, on the wide piazza.

"It is not very long, now, to winter," said she. "Let us go out under the trees, where we can read and talk, this lovely Sunday morning."

"How Mother would approve of this," exclaimed Ottolene, as they sat down under the trees. She was taking in great breaths of the pure country air. The fragrance of the ripened harvests, the garden flowers, and the salt air were more stimulating than food or drink.

Mrs. Murray opened her well-worn Bible on her knees and began to read.

Neltje listened attentively. Ottolene tried to do the same; but there was so much here that her soul hungered for, that her eyes and thoughts would wander away from Mrs. Murray and her good Book.

First of all, over against the cornfield, there was a great clump of that wonderful wild flower which spread itself over the banks of

the North River in September. "Goldenrod" it was called; and Ottolene bathed her eyes in its light.

Then the flowers were still in blossom. She had thought they would be. And from that same garden, where the brightly colored blossoms hung heavy on their stems, came the sweet odor of some phlox, which still lingered in spite of the cold September nights.

A late butterfly fluttered through the air, and balanced its fairy weight on a spray of the golden-rod. In the grasses at their feet, a cricket was chirping its warm contentment. Basking among the things she loved, Ottolene felt that she had never been happier. But that moment of contentment vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

The girl's blue eyes, wandering over the landscape, had turned themselves in the direction of the East River; and now she beheld the very sight her mother was witnessing from another angle. A mass of boats, loaded with brightly clad soldiers, was moving across the river.

"Mrs. Murray!" shrieked the girl. "Look! Look! The British are coming!"

Mrs. Murray's keen eyes followed Ottolene's gaze, even as the American guns began to boom forth.

"They are landing to take possession," she said quietly. "Neltje and Ottolene, come into the house at once; and do, without question, whatever I tell you."

The girls were speechless; but they hurried into the house, where they stood and watched the scene from the east windows, their hearts beating fast. Soon the Sunday calm was shattered by the cries and shouts of battle, and the firing of guns.

Notwithstanding the vigorous defense of the American troops stationed in the city, the great mass of British soldiers were landed, company after company, and steadily spread themselves over the land.

"Our men are being overwhelmed!" cried Neltje, in despair. "They never can stand against that great army!"

"Neltje, this is a time for deeds, not words and tears," exclaimed Mrs. Murray sternly. She had been giving orders to her servants in a calm and dignified manner. Now she came and stood at the window beside the two girls,



"Look! Look! There is General Washington!"--Page 203.



and even her brave heart quailed at the sight of the oncoming foe.

Already the Americans were swarming around the house. Their powder was gone; their guns could no longer be fired. The untrained troops were in a panic, and they were fleeing in all directions.

"Look! Look! There is General Washington!" cried Ottolene.

Out in the cornfield, where the young people had hunted so gaily for red ears of corn, a great white horse was rearing and plunging, its rider spurring it to and fro as he lashed his men with his tongue. For the moment, these men were powerless to fight; but they must be brought under control. Finally, the scattered, frantic troops were gathered together, and Washington ordered a retreat.

With her heart at the breaking point, Mrs. Murray saw the American troops fall into line and stretch out of sight along the dusty road. And almost at their heels came the enemy, for the steady tramp of those long-drilled British ranks could already be heard.

"Do whatsoever I tell you, without question," she again admonished her guests and her house-

hold staff. Then she went out alone into the garden and sat down beneath the trees, with her Bible in her lap.

"Tramp. Tramp." The marching column came nearer, but Mrs. Murray did not so much as raise her eyes from her book, even for a moment.

"Tramp. Tramp. Tramp." The thud and rumble of an army moving on its way filled the mild September air; but the lady under the trees followed the movement of her finger as it traced the line she appeared to be reading.

"Halt!"

Mrs. Murray looked up at the sound of the command.

"Here, my men, is a fitting place to rest, this hot day," came a voice.

The man who spoke was tall and imposing in his appearance. Mrs. Murray rose and curtsied.

"My Lord, General Howe, I believe?" said she.

The British Commander bowed low over her hand.

"My Lord, the heat is intense and it is high

noon. I heard you order your men to rest. While they tarry under the shade of my trees, I wish that you and your officers would come into my house. The midday meal is about to be served, and I can promise you refreshment and rest."

"Did ever Englishman meet a more gracious hostess!" exclaimed General Howe.

Again he ordered a complete respite for his army; and calling his staff to follow him, he went into the big cool house.

"Rest, refreshment, and a charming hostess." General Howe bowed low again, in the direction of Mrs. Murray. "And the pleasure of the company of two young maids, as pretty as a man would care to look upon!" finished he, catching sight of the two girls.

Neltje had caught the spirit of Mrs. Murray's act at once. They must delay the English here, until General Washington had the Americans well under control and ready to give battle. But what would Ottolene do? Would she understand their purpose in entertaining the English officers?

Neltje need not have had one fear on this score, however, for there was a welcoming smile

on Ottolene's sweet round face, as she greeted a handsome young officer.

"What a hot day you have chosen for a march, sir," she said. "Tis the way of September, though. The evenings are cool, but the noonday sun burns to a blister."

The officer mopped his brow. "One forgives the heat when it leads to a spot and to company like this," he answered gallantly.

"I have always heard that the English could turn a fine compliment," returned Ottolene, dimpling. "And you seem to have noticed Mrs. Murray's garden. Is it true that there are such fine flower gardens in England?"

"Flower gardens!" answered the officer.

"Only the fair maid I am talking to surpasses in sweetness our English blooms. Why—Mistress—"

"Van Dam, sir," answered the girl.

"Mistress Van Dam, I come from Oxford, where the brightest flowers in all England bloom."

"What are some of them? Pray, tell me, sir."

"Why, there are hollyhocks, taller than any man, rearing themselves against brick walls. There are pansies blooming at their feet. There are Canterbury-bells and cockscombs and foxgloves and marigolds—"

"Not all blooming at once, surely?"

"No, of course not; but blooming one after the other in such profusion that there are always flowers at Oxford."

Ottolene's face wore an expression of absorbed interest and delight.

"And the wild flowers—tell me about England's wild flowers."

"Well, there is the furze, golden in midsummer and—"

"Madam, I have never tasted such delicious cold pie," Lord Howe was telling Mrs. Murray, close behind these two.

"'Tis a good old English receipt, my lord," answered she.

"And steamed pudding, upon my soul!" continued the General. "The good fates that guard the island of Great Britain certainly inspired us to pause in this spot to-day."

"My lord is too kind," murmured Mrs. Murray. "Will you not have more plum cake, sir? And you?—And you?"

"And Amasa," she directed, in louder tones

than before, "see that you keep all the decanters filled."

At the end of two delightful hours, General Howe bestirred himself.

"We must be on our way to chase the rebels," he said lightly. No muscles moved on the faces of Mrs. Murray and Neltje as they stood together, ready to receive the farewells of their guests.

Out on the lawn, overlooking the river, the men were moving restlessly, waiting to start on their way once more. "We must not tarry longer," continued General Howe, turning to the next in command. "These officers must stir themselves at once. Where is Warren?"

"Tis a pity to disturb him, sir," came the answer, as the one addressed nodded with a smile towards one of the deep window seats where Ottolene and the young officer continued their conversation.

"Warren!" sounded the quick command.

"Here, my Lord," came the reply. But the young man in question did not move forward. Instead, he turned to the window once more.

"Of course, the damp sea air, surrounding the island by day and by night, accounts in a large degree for its wonderful fertility and for the luxuriant blossoming of its flowers."

- "I well understand how that could be."
- "Warren!"
- "Yes, my Lord."
- "And you tell me that fuchsias grow as high as shrubs in Ireland?"
- "Tall as the hollyhocks at Oxford, with wondrous drooping blossoms of rich, varied —"
  - "Forward!"

The young officer started at the command; but Ottolene laid a hand on his arm.

- "And the larkspur?"
- "Blue as your eyes, dear maid. I pray I may see you again some time. Farewell."
- "A whole five minutes you have detained us beyond the time, Warren," exclaimed General Howe sternly. With appropriate expressions of gratitude for the hospitality which had been extended to them, the British officers left the house and mounted their horses, and the column of soldiers moved off towards Harlem.

Ottolene and Neltje lost no time in joining Mrs. Murray under the trees when the soldiers were out of sight. Far up the Bloomingdale road, a cloud of dust still lingered, as Mrs. Mur-

ray opened her Bible, laid aside the marker she had placed there, and ran her finger down the page to the place where she had stopped reading.

"'And they caused the enemy to tarry,' "she read aloud.

"Oh, Mistress Murray! Do you suppose our troops are ready for them?" cried Ottolene.

"At least they are well out of reach," answered the lady, looking up at the sun. "It must be about two hours since General Washington ordered a retreat. The American Army should be in Harlem by this time."

"The selfish, conceited creatures!" exclaimed Ottolene in disgust.

"My dears, I thank you both for all you did to help on this occasion," said Mrs. Murray.

"I would we could have done a great deal more," declared Neltje, who had done her part to make the English officers as comfortable and as loth to leave as was in her power. "And now, Ottolene, we must be starting home. Find Drusilla, and we shall leave at once."

"And I am going to send one of the serving men with you, too," said Mrs. Murray. "Then he can bring me word of your safe arrival home." The four soon started off on the long walk to Mistress Van Dam's, the two girls chatting glibly over what had taken place.

"Think what Clarissa and Sally will say!" exclaimed Ottolene. "And David and Mr. Hamilton, too. I wonder where those two are, with their band of artillery."

"There is no way of knowing," answered her sister. "General Washington will do the wise thing, no matter what it is. Oh, how I hope Father comes home to-night and tells us all the news!"

The heat was oppressive and the streets were deserted, as the four moved down Broadway. When they reached the house, Neltje dismissed Mrs. Murray's man with a smile, and thanked him for attending them.

"May you have a safe journey back, Pompey, and no more visits from redcoats."

"Amen!" answered Pompey devoutly, and made his way back to his mistress just as fast as his legs could carry him.

The girls found their mother sitting quietly in the house. "Didst see anything of thy father, girls?" she asked, as they all sat together.

"Not a sign, Mother. The troops were all

in confusion. I think they had used all their powder firing at the British while they were landing. Oh, how angry General Washington was! But he got them all in line, and they're probably ready for the British now."

Very soon after this, there came to Mistress Van Dam and her daughters, and to other waiting households, the news of the battle at Harlem Heights. The Americans had been ready. "Zounds! Those Colonists know how to fight!" the British officers were reported to have said. Then the days wore on, with little news of the army, and with none of Augustus Van Dam.

Neltje and Ottolene came down to breakfast these mornings with swollen eyes; but during the day there was no sign of a tear. Their mother, ceaselessly busy, grew very silent at her work.

King's College had been turned into a hospital, and every day she went to help in the nursing of the wounded. Drusilla went with her, carrying delicacies for the men; and Neltje and Ottolene were left to care for affairs at home. But day after day, as she scanned the faces of each and every soldier on the cots, she looked in vain for the face of her husband.

One evening, about two weeks after the battle of Harlem Heights, a gaunt, thin, but triumphant soldier appeared at her door.

It was David Henry. He had twenty-four hours' furlough, and had come home with many parcels of gleaming news. The Americans showed a spirit that could not be daunted. General Washington had acted like one inspired.

"Of course he ever insists that ours must be an attitude of defense, rather than attack. With our small numbers, it would be madness to take the offensive now. But how he bids the soldiers hold their ground, and makes them do it! The army is like a young strong plant, sending its roots deeper and deeper into the ground. And Mistress Van Dam, what do you think? Alexander Hamilton is now General Washington's private secretary. He is with him constantly, and he and General Greene grow closer and closer to him."

"But my father!" Neltje burst forth. "Where do you suppose he is all this time?"

"When did you last see him?" asked David, turning to her quickly.

"The night before the British landed at Kip's Bay," answered Mistress Van Dam.

"Since he left us then, we have heard no word of him."

David's face was a study.

"He is alive. Of that I am almost certain," he said, "because we have kept careful count of every man lost in battle. But—"

Here the young man stopped. How could he mention the possibility of the grim prison, not very far from the house; or the much grimmer prison ship in the harbor?

Mistress Van Dam read his thoughts, however. Indeed, the picture of these two had loomed in her imagination many times.

"You think my husband is kept in captivity?" asked she.

"It is possible."

"Well, how can we find out?" implored Neltje. "Is there no way to find where he is? Is there no way we could get to him?"

"Neltje, Ottolene, Mistress Van Dam! I will make it my solemn and first duty, before I go back to the fort to-morrow morning, to search the records and discover the whereabouts, if possible, of Master Van Dam."

The four were sitting on the piazza at the back of the house. A few perennials bloomed

here and there in the wreck of the garden, and an oppressive stillness hung over the desolate spot.

"And if my father is a prisoner within the British lines, what can we do to rescue him?" asked Ottolene.

"We cannot do anything at present," answered David, trying to be as cheerful as possible. "We must wait until we can make an exchange. In the meantime, Ottolene, if your father really is a captive, you can take him food every day."

"Is that possible?" exclaimed Mistress Van Dam.

"Yes. I do not know how long it has been going on; but I heard yesterday that the ladies of the town had begun to make daily trips to the prison with supplies of food."

"We will begin to-morrow," said Mistress Van Dam with firmness. Hearing this, Neltje jumped up and went into the house, to see just what the larder held ready to be taken to the prison early the next morning. As she went through the big living-room, a bright glow from outside attracted her attention.

"Mother! Ottolene! David!" she cried,

rushing back to the piazza. "The town is on fire!"

Sweeping along the East River, from the direction of Whitehall Slip, came great flames, carrying everything before them. Cries of horror were coming over the air, too,—shrill shrieks and groans, and, once more, the sound of a surging crowd on Broadway. But this time it was a mob of distress, not an enraged populace.

"Mistress Van Dam, you and the girls stay here beside your home, but flee for your lives at the first approach of danger," admonished David. And the next instant the young soldier was darting down Broadway to help fight the flames.

"Trinity has fallen!" came the cry.

"We must save Saint Paul's," David told himself. The beautiful church, with its wide portico, was still unharmed. In a few moments he had marshaled a group of young men around him.

Led by the young officer of Captain Hamilton's company, this group scaled the walls and stood on the roof of the building, stamping out great fiery sparks as they fell, and extinguish-

ing the tiny flames as they tried to eat into and under the cornices.

Then, as fast as the flames themselves, was spread the word: "The Mayor has given orders that the row of houses bordering Barclay Street shall be burned down. It is the only way to save the whole city."

David heard the cries as he stood on the roof of Saint Paul's. His face was black with soot and scorched with flame, and his hands were blistered. The picture of two of his friends stood out with dreadful tragedy in his mind, as he heard the words. It was the only thing to be done. Those terrible onrushing flames must be met with fire. The Mayor was right. But in one of that row of doomed houses lived Mrs. Lansing and Sally.

David gave a few hurried orders to the others on the roof of the church. Then he climbed down to the ground and sped away. It was not far to the Lansings' home. He raced on, while the scorching blaze lighted the very heavens with its redness.

At last he reached the door. Sally and her mother had been collecting silver and valuables, and were waiting to see if the flames would really come near enough to endanger them. Their faces were deadly pale, but they appeared to be quite calm.

"Mrs. Lansing! Sally! I came to help. This block of houses must go. It is the only way to save the city. You must not wait an instant. You must come at once. Tell me what I may carry, and we will make haste to the Van Dams. They seem out of harm's way for the present."

"David, my dear boy, we have collected all that we can carry."

"Then come, come at once, I beseech you!"

David gathered up a great armful of beautiful calf-bound volumes, and, urging the little group to make haste, he led the way through the smoky, scorching air, back to the Van Dam house, where mother and daughters were waiting.

Mistress Van Dam received the Lansings with open arms. "The girls shall sleep down here," she said, "and thou shalt have the whole upper floor to thyselves."

David deposited the books on the floor of the living-room, and, leaving Mrs. Lansing and Sally to tell their own tale, hurried out again.

All night, he and others fought the fire. Even after the great flames were subdued, and the path of the fire blocked, the untiring men worked among the ruins, carrying the burned and maimed to the hospital, and searching for what little could be rescued.

When morning dawned on the stricken city, the pale light that gleamed over the East River showed that the lower half of New York was a smouldering wreck.

"I should estimate that five hundred buildings have been burned," said one of David's comrades of the night.

"I wonder if this is more of that British deviltry," muttered David.

"It is hard to say," said the one beside him. He was an old man, a grocer who had often served the Van Dams, and David knew him well. "I do hear it broke out in a public house down at Whitehall."

"Well, the flames have done their worst," said David, looking at the scene before him.

As he looked over the desolate tract, there came to him that scene which met his eyes when he first came to New York,—the Battery and Bowling Green and the harbor and Broadway,

all under a clear blue sky and a flood of sunlight, with Augustus Van Dam and the smiling Neltje to meet him. What dreams had soared through his mind then! And how those dreams still lingered with him!

"Hugh," he said, laying his grimy hand on the still grimier coat sleeve of the older man, "even in the face of this, we must not despair. New York will be built up again. General Washington will win the day; and a new city and a new land will be ours."

"You always did talk like a book, Master David," said the old man.

"No matter what I talk like, I must try and make myself look like a soldier." And David hurried home for such cleaning as he could accomplish. An hour later he was on his horse, making his way back to Harlem.

#### CHAPTER IX

To find Augustus Van Dam was now David's sole purpose. He was convinced that he was a prisoner. "If only it is in one of the city prisons; then, at least, they can get food to him; but—on the prison ship Jersey—" He shuddered at the thought. He had heard the rumors of the horrible hardships there. "At least he is safe from shot and shell," he told himself. It was a soldier's duty to keep a brave heart.

He had left the outskirts of the city, and was long past Inclenberg, when he saw a vaguely familiar figure in the road before him. Hearing the clatter of hoofs behind him, the figure turned. Recognizing Charles Langley, David quickly reined in his horse, and cried, "Halt!"

"I arrest you, Langley, in the name of the Continental Army, as an enemy to the Cause."

"I am glad to go with you, Henry," said the man at his side. "I know you will not believe me—you have no reason to honor my word—but I wish to go with you. I am no longer an enemy to the Cause of America."

"Hush!" said David, more sharply than before. "I have had all the lying from you I wish to hear, Charles Langley."

The latter stood unmoved, while David bound his hands together and bade his prisoner march forward beside him.

There was a very strong sense of relief in David's mind, at having captured this strange and evasive young man, who had mingled so freely with their little group, and who had had such easy access to the homes of some of the most fiery patriots in the city.

"He could do untold mischief, with all he knows," David had more than once thought; and he had blamed himself again and again for not being more vigilant after hearing Sally's tale of the maps.

He rode on in an exultant silence, which was presently broken by Charles.

"David, you say you are through with my lies. Well, I am through with lying."

The horseman rode on, refusing to speak. But his prisoner persevered. "And it is one

of your own countrymen who has brushed the cobwebs from my brain."

Still David took no notice. This young Englishman was clever; he was wily; he had imagination. David would not be fooled by him again.

"Do you remember Captain Nathan Hale?" Charles asked bluntly.

At this, David gave sudden ear, although he made no sign of interest. "Remember him? I know him well."

"You knew him well," said Charles Langley. "He was hanged as a spy this morning, from an apple tree in Colonel Rutger's orchard."

"What!" thundered David, leaping from his horse and standing face to face with the man in the road.

"What I say is God's own truth. I saw it all from my window. And David, you may imprison me in chains for the rest of my life, but my soul will live for the Cause for which that stainless man died."

"Tell me all you know of this," commanded David, white and stern.

"I heard the tale from one of the soldiers," answered Charles. "Hale had evidently been

all through the British lines, and was not recognized as a soldier in his brown suit of clothes. He went into a tavern on the Long Island side, kept by a Tory woman and much frequented by the British. The story goes that suddenly a man came in and reported that a boat was coming. Hale thought it was for him and hurried out. This aroused the suspicion of those around him, and he was arrested with many detailed sketches of the English quarters on his person."

"When was this?" asked David, in a strained voice.

"That was last evening. He was brought to Howe's headquarters in the Beekman house and was tried before a court martial."

"Where did he spend the night?"

"In the Beekman greenhouse, under heavy guard. And—" Charles clinched his teeth, "they acted like barbarians to him. He asked for a Bible and a clergyman, and they refused him both;—only hanged him like a dog. Provost Marshal Cunningham, and a few others, gathered there in the park to see the ghastly deed. Cunningham mocked him, and asked if he had anything to say, and Hale replied: 'My

only regret is that I have but one life to give to my country."

For an instant, David was speechless. Charles was forgotten;—all he could see was that fine scholar's face; all he could hear was that deep sweet voice. Nathan Hale—Nathan Hale was gone.

"And David, I have vowed to make one more life do what it can for the Country of such a man. If only all Americans would strive to be like him!"

David bent over Charles Langley's hands and untied his bonds. "I am going to trust you," he said, "for the sake of that man whose soul has flown."

David lost no time, after his return to the American camp, in going over the lists of prisoners. He very soon found that Augustus Van Dam was held captive in the old jail, not far from the college. He sent this news posthaste to the wife and daughters of the prisoner.

"We can carry provisions every day, can't we, Mother?" asked Neltje, the quick tears springing to her eyes.

"I, myself, will do the baking," said Mistress

Van Dam quietly; and not one finger were Neltje, Ottolene, or Drusilla allowed to lay upon flour or dough. Mistress Van Dam fashioned with her own hands every bit of food that they carried each day to the prison, sometimes toiling far into the night.

"I wish I knew that Father had all he wanted of it," said Ottelene.

"We can only hope and pray that he has," answered her mother. She who had been more sprightly than her two daughters put together, as her husband was wont to say, had grown quieter day by day, ever since the night of the fire.

So the days dragged by.

"Mother, I wish you would let us do more of the work," begged Neltje.

"The best remedy for a sad heart is a busy pair of hands," said her mother, pinching the pale cheeks of her daughter. "Moreover, I want you and Ottolene to have as much brightness as we can find, these anxious days. Did ever girls spend the heyday of their youth in such times as those of your generation are doing?"

"But Mother, it is good for us to work, too,"

"The Pursuit of Happiness" 227 said Ottolene. "My heart is as full of my father as is thine."

"Bless thy dear heart," said her mother, putting both arms around the girl who would always be her baby. And thenceforth Ottolene was privileged to help in making the bread, and in carrying it to American prisoners.

News of the movements of the two armies was floating through the city. By the ninth of October, two English frigates had been sent up the Hudson River to cut off supplies coming to the Americans. About this time, General Washington moved his camp across Manhattan Island and a little farther north, to the Bronx River. Then General Howe moved his troops to New Rochelle, and the Americans were led by their Commander to White Plains.

On October 28th, news traveled down to New York of a fierce battle at this place. Neltje's cheeks grew whiter than ever, as the full accounts of this battle reached the city.

These accounts were soon followed by the appearance of the British troops in New York. They swarmed the streets and the taverns and the public houses. Once again the enemy was

in possession, and only a remnant of the Continental Army remained for purposes of observation.

"General Cornwallis is leading half of the British Army to combat our troops, and General Howe is back here again. They like New York,—the beasts! And how they do enjoy themselves!"

Sally Lansing was speaking. She and her mother, who had taken refuge at the Van Dam home on the night of the great fire, had stayed on at the urgent request of the mistress of the house, and the two families had been a great comfort to each other.

"Those miserable Britishers have upset everything. They must know it cannot last; but our New York Congress, which has been holding its session at Phillipse Manor, has gone up to Poughkeepsie now. Why, do you know that even the Continental Congress has fled from Philadelphia to Baltimore?"

"These are dark days for our country, but we must not despair."

It was Mrs. Lansing who spoke. She, like her hostess, had unconsciously laid aside the vivacity which had made her one of the belles of New York in her day; and it was only on rare occasions, now, that she entered into conversation.

"We won't despair," exclaimed Ottolene.

"But I wish people wouldn't be turncoats.

Some of the girls don't hesitate a moment to invite the English officers to their homes and entertain them."

"I wonder if Clarissa will be here to-night," said Mistress Van Dam. She was expecting the girl, and was always anxious, these days, if there was the slightest delay.

"Here she is!" exclaimed Neltje, a moment later, as Clarissa came through the door with one of her twin brothers close at her heels.

It was many weeks since the girl's face had shone with such joy and excitement as it did at this moment.

"What news?" burst from the group at the table.

"General Wayne—Mad Anthony—has captured Stony Point!"

"Richard!"

"Yes! Word came to our post this morning. General Washington, it is said, gave him twelve hundred men. Not one of their guns

was loaded—it was a bayonet charge. You know, Stony Point is almost an island when the tide is high. Well, about midnight, our men crossed the causeway when the tide was low, and they were close on the garrison before the English saw them and began to fire. Our men rushed forward with their bayonets set, and stopped for nothing. In a few minutes the whole British garrison surrendered. And not a man was killed on either side. General Wayne did receive a bullet in his shoulder, but he kept right on fighting."

When Richard Morton finished his story, the four girls whirled themselves around with joy.

"Our arms have won! Our arms have won!" they cried.

"When will the English understand that they will never conquer us?" questioned Mrs. Lansing.

"If only they would learn quickly," said Mistress Van Dam. The vision of that grim prison wall cast a constant shadow of sorrow on her life.

"Thou wilt see thy sister safely home, Richard?" she asked, a few moments later.

"Oh, indeed, though the streets are quiet

enough. Howe and his men enjoy their easy life. Do not be over fearful, Mistress Van Dam."

"I am glad we have two of our boys left to take care of us," said Mistress Van Dam. The Morton twins had always been great favorites with her. "I wish that David could have been left here, too."

"If there is one man I envy, next to Alexander Hamilton, it is David Henry," declared Richard. "He grows closer and closer to General Washington, I hear; and he is winning laurels for himself. He is so brave and wise!"

Neltje glowed with pride.

"I wish I could hear of some of the things he does," said Ottolene.

"I'll tell you how you may, and then we must be gone," said Richard. "The next time you go to the hospital, ask for his orderly—Bradshaw, I think the name is. He will tell you all you want to know about him."

"We will search him out to-morrow," said Mistress Van Dam. "Thanks for all the good news thou hast brought us, Clarissa and Richard."

It was the afternoon of the next day be-

fore this good lady found time from her duties to make her daily visit to the hospital; and when she started she found all three girls waiting to accompany her.

When they reached the hospital, Mistress Van Dam asked at once for David Henry's orderly.

"He has been grievously ill," she was told.

"But he is on the road to recovery now, and a visit from all these bright faces will be a fine tonic for him."

Neltje followed her mother closely as they went by the long line of cots. It seemed that her heart would burst if she did not hear something of David soon.

"Here he is, Madam," said the soldier who had led the way. "Some ladies to see you, Bradshaw."

The wounded soldier turned on his side, and Neltje and her mother both gave a start as they recognized the thin pale face of Charles Langley.

He held out his hand with a smile, but they both drew back.

"Charles!" exclaimed Neltje, at last. She was sorry for him.

"I forgot I hadn't explained, or that David hadn't told you, either," he said. "It seems so long ago." He drew himself up, coughing as he did so.

"Do not try to tell us now," said Mistress Van Dam. "It will do another time. We just came to see how you are, and to hear what you know about David."

"Thank you, thank you! But you must listen. David can tell you that it is true. I am on your side now, and always will be. And I have my right name now. Some day I will tell it all, if you have time to listen."

Mistress Van Dam turned again to the soldier who was with them.

"Mr.—Bradshaw—is one of our men, is he not?"

"Oh yes, Madam. He was wounded at White Plains. He is one of our bravest men." Neltje and Ottolene stood in the background, not knowing what to think. It seemed that Charles Langley had changed his name; and now he lay here, honored as one wounded in the great cause of human liberty.

"We have time to listen, if you feel strong enough to tell us," said Mistress Van Dam.

While she and Sally stood patiently by his bed, he told them of his change of name.

"I took my real name," he said, "and gave up that of my foster father. I lived with him from the time I was a baby, and always went by the name of Langley."

"And who were your parents, Charles?" asked Mistress Van Dam. The young man had always been very reticent about himself, but now he was ready to talk freely.

"They were Londoners. I was left, as a very young child, to some friends of my parents. When I had grown up they sent me here to make a living." The story was brief, and not particularly exciting.

"And now, a little about our David," said Mistress Van Dam, "and then we shall leave you."

"He is one of the finest soldiers in General Washington's army," exclaimed Charles. "His wisdom, his bravery, and his understanding have brought him very close to the greatest man in America."

Soon after this the four took their leave, still dumbfounded at the strange turn of events that had made a friend out of an enemy.



"I am on your side now, and always will be."-- $Page\ 233$ .



The weeks rolled slowly by. The beauty of New York had vanished. Its shade trees were uprooted; its streets were in confusion; the ships which had sailed the seas for years, bringing wealth to the city, were now rotting at their wharves, and only the military transports remained.

From time to time, the little group of waiting women were rewarded for their patience with news from the scenes of battle. But it was often news that wrung their hearts; and always, night and day, that prison was in their thoughts.

David's letters furnished the brightest moments in those dreary days. He had written from Trenton, describing the bitter journey across the Delaware, when Washington led his half-clad army through that field of ice. He had written from Valley Forge, and from many other points. The two older women and the girls read and reread the letters.

"Dost think he sounds hopeful?" Mistress Van Dam would ask wistfully.

"Yes, Mother, I do," Ottolene would say stoutly; and Neltje, who treasured the special messages that were addressed to her, would add:

"Mother, I can never lose hope so long as David is fighting for us."

One day there came a letter a little longer than the others. It had been despatched from Mount Vernon.

"General Washington brought Alexander Hamilton and myself down here, for a night in his home," wrote David. "The place is blessed with his love for it. I awoke early this morning and saw him out in the garden — alas, almost as run to destruction as yours, Ottolene—examining the buds on the fruit trees, and poking among the leaves. And when he came in to breakfast his talk was not of war and battles, but of his fields and his farm. He is sore beset in his mind that his home should be neglected, but I understand he will not allow that money shall be spent upon it while the troops remain unpaid. Mrs. Washington exceeds even Clarissa and her mother in knitting. She works unceasingly on socks for the soldiers. I wish you might all see her, sitting in her room upstairs, knitting hour after hour."

"I am going to take that letter over to the hospital, for Charles to read," said Sally, after they had all listened to it for the second time. Neltje and Ottolene looked at each other knowingly, but neither said a word.

The entire household, including Mrs. Lansing, soon noticed that Sally was making frequent visits to the hospital. Charles was now retained there as an attendant, and helped the women of the city distribute their gifts of fruit and jelly where they were most needed.

"Charles is always so glad to hear from David," said Ottolene. "But he can't be as glad as I am."

Gradually the letters grew brighter and more jubilant. They would surely see David soon. General Washington was turning his army towards New York again.

Then, one day, the cry rang through the city: "Cornwallis has surrendered!"

The sword of England had been handed to the Commander-in-Chief of the American army.

"Peace!" went up the cry, over and over again. "The war is ended! The Colonies are free! Peace to our Land!"

"And my father will be set free!" cried Ottolene, while their hearts all throbbed with joy.

### CHAPTER X

"When will they open the prison doors?" asked Ottolene. "The enemy has no right to hold our men an instant longer. Mother, what can be done?"

The girl had only waited to make sure that her ears had heard aright. Then she had flown to the jail, to be the first to welcome her father on his release. But she found the grim doors still barred, and the prison sentries still standing immovable on either side of the gate.

- "We have no orders to open the prison gates," they told her.
  - "And why not?" she asked hotly.
- "Ask the Lord General," answered one of them impudently.
  - "Mother! What can be done?"

Charles Bradshaw, who, at the invitation of Sally, had limped to the Van Dam house to share in the rejoicing, answered this question.

"Ottolene, you must be patient. They say

that the British authorities have forbidden any word of peace being sent to the prisoners. I suppose they fear an uprising, in revenge for their long months of captivity."

"Word is forbidden to be sent to American soldiers that the battle is won? They are kept in captivity when they are free?" Ottolene was bitter.

But the girl's fit of temper did not last long. Her dough was rising in the kitchen; it was nearly ready for the oven. Her cool, determined wits were working swiftly and surely on an idea which had entered her active brain.

This bread-making, as we have seen, had been the sole charge of Mistress Van Dam and Ottolene; even Drusilla had no hand in it. The girl now peeped under the snowy cloths at the round loaves of dough, almost as white as their covering. In less than five minutes they would be ready for the oven.

The rest of the household had scattered. Ottolene hurried into the living-room. She sat down at her father's secretary, dipped his quill pen in the ink, and drew a sheet of paper towards her.

Then, in a clear, childish hand, she wrote in

six places: "Cornwallis has surrendered. Peace is declared. You are free."

Carefully she cut the six messages in separate little sheets, and folded each one several times.

Out in the kitchen once more, she poked six wads of paper into six swelling loaves, which quickly closed over their new possessions. Then into the oven went those pans of snowy dough, and a rosy-cheeked girl sat down quietly by the window to wait for them to bake.

"I'm going to take the bread to the prison smoking hot to-day," she called, as her mother passed the door.

"If only we could send them the good news!" said her mother. "I shall put on my bonnet and be ready to go with you, Ottolene."

"And I am coming, too," cried Neltje.
"The house is not large enough to hold my joy to-day."

"Let us all go," said Mrs. Lansing, her eyes sparkling as of old. "Let us walk the streets together as free Americans!" They all sallied forth, Sally and Charles bringing up the rear of the company, for the latter still limped badly.

"The English are not so high and mighty this morning," said Sally, with her gurgling laugh.

When they reached the prison gates Ottolene and her mother handed in the hampers of food, as they had done so many times before.

"Smell that tasty crust!" said one of the guards under his breath. "The poor devils will fall upon that right quickly."

"Let us walk down to Bowling Green and back," suggested Ottolene. "It is too great a day to stay indoors." They were all of one mind. The end of the long struggle had come, and their dreams were at last beginning to come true. Fully an hour later they turned to make their way home, when there came a faint sound of cheering from within the prison. At last, the prisoners had heard the news!

As they hurried back, there came a sound that was neither faint nor uncertain. It was the roar of human voices and the crashing of doors and iron bolts. The guards had been overcome. The prison gates were wrenched open, and the sentries were powerless as the stream of Americans burst forth.

There were young men and old men, with

unkempt locks and beards of several months' growth. There were men whose hair had grown snow white from the torture of long imprisonment, men in civilian clothes, and men in ragged Continental uniforms. They were dazed by the light of day; they were feeble from lack of exercise; but they sent up frenzied shouts as they surged forth from the prison, for at last they were free.

The sentries slipped away without a word. From a little distance the Tory troops looked on, jeering at the uncouth appearance of their former prisoners. But the jeering had no sting. They were the conquered ones now, and these men with disheveled beards and tattered garments were the free men, the children of the Land of Liberty.

Charles and the little group of women stood, for a moment, rooted to the spot. The tears were running down Neltje's face. Her mother stood pale and silent. But Ottolene pressed forward, step by step, scanning the face of every man who emerged from the prison.

Suddenly her eyes lit up. "Father! My father!" she cried, pushing her way through the crowd. A moment later, Augustus Van Dam,

"And now, our first thought must be to build again."

It was a day or two after the breaking of the jail, and the reunited family were sitting as of old, talking with their guests, the Lansings.

It was Mrs. Lansing who spoke. Up to now, she had had no heart to make another home for herself and Sally. She had been content to stay in the safe refuge she had found with her friends. But now she was impatient to have her own home.

"It behooves every New Yorker, every American, to make a home which shall be a stronghold for the peace and freedom which has been won," she continued. And before that week was ended, she and Sally and the limping Charles went forth to seek lodgings near the site of the old Lansing home.

"Has any word come from David?" asked Augustus Van Dam, morning after morning, as he sat in his high-backed chair, smoking his long pipe. He was thinner and older, but once more content in the comfort of his home.

"Here is a letter that has just come by the morning's post," announced Neltje, one day. "I shall read parts of it. 'Sir Guy Carleton has written General Washington that the English troops are ready to vacate New York. And I believe that on November 25th our troops will officially take possession of the city, with the Commander at their head."

As Neltje finished reading this sentence, a messenger came to the door. "I have been sent by the City Council," he said, "to make you aware, Master Van Dam, that there will be a meeting of all patriots to-morrow at Cape's Tavern, to prepare for the entry of the American forces into New York, with General Washington and Governor Clinton."

"Tell the Council I will be there," said Augustus, with his old energy and vehemence.

He returned from the meeting the next day, eager to tell of the plans that had been drawn up for the great event.

"All the citizens are to march in a body to meet the troops," he explained to his wife and the girls, "and each is to wear a Union cockade of black and white ribbons, and a spray of laurel in his hat, We are to meet at Bull's Head Tay-

ern and form a great square around the General and the Governor, and so conduct them through the city."

It seemed to the girls that the next few days would never pass. The chill November wind blew in from the river, and the devout New Yorkers prayed that it might not storm when the great day arrived.

The twenty-fifth of November dawned clear and cold and brilliant. The British troops were already on the move, when General Knox took possession of the city with his American forces. When this was done, the citizens' committee started on horseback from Bowling Green, to greet the conquerors.

Mistress Van Dam and her daughters, with the Mortons and the Lansings, did not miss a move of either army. Not one of them spoke, as the long lines of red-coated soldiers tramped down the Bowery to Chatham and Pearl Streets, and then on to the river, where they were to embark.

Then Neltje whispered: "How long it seems since that army landed here that Sunday morning when Mrs. Murray held them back."

"Pray that the years of peace, which, please

God, lie before us, may be many times longer than those dreary stretches which are past," breathed Mistress Van Dam.

"Here they come! Here they come!" exclaimed Ottolene, as shouts went up from all sides.

George Washington had ridden down from Harlem that morning, and was now entering New York. At the head of the procession rode a body of cavalry from Westchester. Then came General Washington and Governor Clinton, Lieutenant Governor Van Cortlandt, with the members of the City Council, and handsome General Knox and his officers. Then came the long line of exultant and thankful New Yorkers from all walks of life. The English troops were still boarding their boats as this procession reached Wall Street.

David had been very near the Commander-in-Chief during the march into the city. As soon as he could leave Bull's Head Tavern, where the official reception was held, he made his way up Broadway with all possible haste. He had seen his cherished little group when he passed the spot where they were watching, and he was impatient to be with them once more.

And a few minutes later, he and Neltje were together, telling each other of the thrilling events that had taken place since they had been separated.

That had been a wonderful day for the city. At night, Governor Clinton gave a dinner at Fraunce's Tavern to General Washington and many of his officers, at which the first of several toasts was to the United States of America. Then New York gave itself up to rejoicing. For two days, homes and taverns rang with joyous talk and holiday cheer.

But soon after the evacuation of the city by the British troops, this joy took on a shade of gravity, even of sadness.

The great General who had led the American army to victory, the wise man who had overcome all trials, all hardships, all discouragements, was now about to lay down his arms as Commander-in-Chief of the American forces, to return to the quiet home at Mount Vernon and the private life for which he longed. On Thursday, December fourth, the same officers who had moved in triumph through the city streets with their General, now gathered once more at Fraunce's Tavern to bid him good-

bye. One after one, the officers held George Washington's hand as they passed before him. And when all had given him their personal salute, and stood before him as a body, he addressed them in few and simple words.

"With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you," he said. "I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable."

The officers followed him to Whitehall Ferry, where a corps of light infantry stood in line as a guard of honor.

There he embarked on a barge and departed from the city, waving his hat in farewell to the crowds on the shore, as he sailed away over the waters.

"It seems as though life were beginning all over again," said Mistress Van Dam the next morning at the breakfast table. Her face beamed over the pewter urn. "The war and all its horrors seem like a terrible dream now."

"But it wasn't a dream, Mother; it was real," said the practical Ottolene. "And I think we've got to keep an eye on those British for a long time."

### "Ottolene!"

The voice of Augustus Van Dam sounded sharply as of old; but it quickly softened as the girl turned towards him.

- "Come here, close to me, child," said he; and in an instant she was on the arm of his chair, with her father's arm around her.
- "Often I have been irritable and out of temper with you and Neltje and Mother, have I not, Ottolene?"
- "No, Father, never!" answered the girl, almost choking him with a hug. Augustus smiled.
- "Often I have scolded the two of you when you were little girls, for no reason whatever."
  - "I have no remembrance of it, Father."
- "My temper has caused many a stormy hour here in this very room itself, which was made for peace and happiness."
- "Father! What do you mean by such talk as this? If ever thou wast cross to me, I have long ago forgotten all about it."
- "Ottolene, child, go back to thy seat. I have something to say to my family."

The girl did as she was told and slipped wonderingly into her chair, as Master Van Dam rose to his feet, his great height towering at the head of the table.

"Mother, Neltje, Ottolene, David, — all of you have heard what has just been said. In the happiness of the present, Ottolene hath forgotten all my unreasoning rage and gouty temper. So would I have my family and all New York and all America forget England's unfairness and unreasoning attitude towards us. I would have us as a family strive for this, and endeavor, now that our cause is won, to make her in our thoughts a sister land again, instead of an enemy."

"Thou speakest with great wisdom, Augustus. 'Twill not be hard for me to put war out of my heart," answered his wife.

"Nor for me," echoed Neltje, drawing near to David.

"You have uttered the thought of a great man, Master Van Dam," exclaimed David Henry, starting to his feet and giving the military salute to the tall figure at the head of the table.

Ottolene had also risen and was at her father's side again.

"I cannot see that my father is in any way

like George of England and his Parliament," said she, hotly. "But as thou askest me, Father, I will truly strive for a kindly feeling towards Great Britain. And now may we please stop all this serious talk, and, beginning with to-day, take our walks in the garden as we used to do?"

"Without fail," answered the head of the house, starting for the piazza. "But what is left of the garden?"

"Scarcely a flower has had room to bloom here for many months," declared Ottolene, "choked as they were by the earthworks of the war. But the roots of things are here. See, the Baltimore Belle still clings to the railing; and next spring, when the grass is leveled, the flower beds can soon be laid out nicely again. And look! Father, Mother, — look! There is a strong young sprout on the stump of the old pear tree. We must guard it well."

"Yes," agreed Augustus Van Dam, bending over the young sprout in the early winter cold. "We must guard it well."

















